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BY THE

REV. S. S. LAWS, LL. D.,

TO THE

SYNOD OF MISSOURI (O. S.)

WHICH MET AT

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, OCTOBER 8, 1872.

18369

[FOR THE OLD SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN.]

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A LETTER.

MR. MODERATOR AND BRETHREN:

As I looked upon your Synod, in its recent place of meeting, my thoughts leaped back over a period of precisely twelve years. The second Wednedsay of October, 1860, your Synod met in that very house, and, by the provisions of the Constitution, I preached the opening sermon, having moderated the preceding Synod, which met in the city of St. Louis. I distinctly recall, as will others, that both of those Synods were filled with discussions on subjects much less interesting and important than those which occupied your recent meeting in determining your future. That interval of twelve years—what an eventful period in both Church and State!

You are all aware that I have been for some years a member of the New York Presbytery, whose territory is the city of New York. When I came to Missouri, a few weeks since, I had no expectation of being at this meeting of Synod. But, now that I have been there, I can say I was most happy at meeting so many friends of former days, and such a goodly number of my old students; and I assure you that I sincerely appreciate the opportunity of joining my counsels with yours in once more establishing your Synod in her goings. I was also glad to meet there a member of the committee appointed in May last, by the General Assembly with which my Presbytery is connected, to visit you at this meeting. The object of that visit is "a closer union" of your Synod with that Assembly, "on conditions mutually acceptable." This unexpectedly opens up the whole question again of your status and relations, which can only be wisely determined by a reference to the past as well as to the present. And I need not say that you should act upon a candid, unselfish, and unimpassioned judgment, formed in view of all the facts, present and past.

There are not wanting a good many well meaning and easy going people who indolently sing themselves to sleep, repeating as a lullaby the proverb, *Let by-gones be by-gones*, or—

"Let the dead Past bury its dead!"

Psalm of Life.

This is all well and very right, so far as resentful feelings and unchristian tempers are concerned. "But he is a great blockhead who learns nothing from the past." And we should also be admonished by other verses from that Psalm of Life, to—

"Act—act in the living Present!
Heart within and God o'er head.
* * * * * *
Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

In addressing you as the Old School Synod of Missouri, I am reminded of a somewhat singular incident of recent occurrence. The papers inform us that the Order to which Père Hyacinthe belonged, recently, at Paris, buried him by name, and in the use of the burial service. The Père, however, insists that he is not dead but a living organism, and, acting on this view of his situation, notwitstanding his name is dropped from the rolls of the living and transferred to the dead list, he has taken to himself a wife, and, monk as he was, entered into this new and most interesting relation. In fact, he seems to feel that he is more alive than he was under the old régime, and that he has more to live for. Now, has Père Hyacinthe any *right* to live in spite of the decree of the Pope and of his own Order having buried him with due form and ceremony? And, under this state of the case, is he a *de jure* as well as a *de facto* institution? Has he any right thus to treat and unite with another institution, whether *de jure* or *de facto*—a divinely constituted and living organism—on the basis of accordance of views, common sympathies, aims and interests? The fact is, we must leave it to the Père and the Old School Catholics associated with him in the Declaration and Testimony against the errors of his Church, and pledged with him to "use their best endeavors to bring back the Church of their

fathers to her ancient purity and integrity," to answer these questions and make this matter clear to the world; and no doubt we shall hear from them favorably in due time, and have occasion to rejoice with them over the stand they have taken in spite of the opposition and persecution to which it has subjected them.

It is a matter of notoriety, that, in general, the Presbyteries of your Synod have not been represented in any General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church since the year 1866. For six years, therefore, your body has occupied an isolated and somewhat anomalous position. In several instances, during this interval, men of the highest character in the Church were appointed by different Presbyteries commissioners to the General Assembly (O. S.) with which your Synod was formerly in organic relation, and when they presented themselves, they were refused seats on the floor of that body. In 1869 our (O. S.) General Assembly met for the last time, and to the regular meeting of that year, in the city of New York, a commissioner from within the bounds of your Synod was sent and was refused a seat; and that commissioner was one of the oldest, most distinguished and highly respected members of the Synod, and was duly accredited from one of your Presteries. Thus for three long years did the Synod go to that Assembly, in the name of her divine and adorable Master, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock;" but the door was not opened unto you. You were refused seats on its floor, excluded from its counsels, shut out from communing therein, as in former days, with our blessed Lord; and thus this Synod of office bearers in the kingdom of Christ, venerable for years, and for its list of honored dead, was treated as an alien and outcast from the commonwealth of Israel.

Let us glance at the cause alleged for this course of action. The paper, known as the Declaration and Testimony, was published September 2d, 1865, and was occasioned by, and designed to be a testimony against, the utterances of the Assemblies from 1861 to 1865. The Louisville Presbytery, at a regular meeting, soon after its publication, passed an almost unanimous vote approving of that Declaration and Testimony.

For that reason, and for no other ostensible reason, the next General Assembly, that of 1866, which met in St. Louis, Missouri, as its first act after organizing, expelled the commissioners of the Louisville Presbytery (Rev. Dr. Stuart Robinson, Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Wilson, Hon. Mark Hardin, and Gov. C. A. Wickliffe,) from their seats in the Assembly. (Concise Record, pp. 3–4.) But there were forty-one ministers and seventy-eight elders in various parts of the Church, mostly in Kentucky and Missouri, who had *individually* subscribed their names to that paper, known as the "Declaration and Testimony." With reference to *them* the Assembly "condemned" the paper they had signed "as a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims," and "summoned" them to appear before the next General Assembly "to answer for what they had done in this matter," and at once suspended them from the exercise of all their official functions in Presbyteries and Synods until their "case" should be decided, and forbade Presbyteries and Synods meanwhile to "enroll" any one of them, at any meeting, "as entitled to a seat," and in the event that any Presbytery or Synod should admit any one of them to a seat, "then that Presbytery (or Synod) shall, *ipso facto*, be dissolved;" and those who should "adhere to the action of the Assembly," were "authorized and directed" to organize themselves into a *new* body, with the same name, "authority and functions *of the original* Presbytery," or Synod.* (C. R., 77–78.)

*I will here append the record in full of the *ipso facto* resolutions, so called from the occurrence of that Latin phrase in the fourth resolution, and the "reasons" relied on as the best that could be given in support of them. This record, be it remembered, was made up as the result of two full weeks' debate, mostly on the side of the majority. But, even conceding the entirely erroneous principle of action underlying it, that the Assembly is unrestrained by the Constitution of the Church in the assumption and exercise of discretionary powers, there is still so much bald confusion and incongruity of thought pervading the whole action that it will be as great a puzzle as a wonder to the future historian, who may not be in possession of the extraordinary and personal elements of that high occasion:

"The Moderator. Before announcing the vote, I wish to say that immediately after its announcement I will entertain a motion that a brother be requested to lead us in prayer. The vote stands, affirmative, 196; negative, 37.

On motion of Dr. F. T. Brown, the Rev. A. T. McGill, D. D., was requested

Those who only *voted* in the Louisville Presbytery for the Declaration and Testimony paper, but did *not* sign it, are classed with the signers, and dealt with in the same way. I have made no distinct point of this, as all that is said of the signing applies with emphasis to the voting.

At its next meeting, after this action of the Assembly, 1866,

to lead the Assembly in prayer for the blessing of God to attend the action just taken, which he did. *a*

The Rev. A. P. Forman, Dr. Yantis, and others, gave notice of protests against the vote adopting the paper of Dr. Gurley.

Dr. Yantis asked what was his position in the house.

The Moderator stated that by the effect of the resolutions just adopted the signers of the Declaration and Testimony were no longer members of this Assembly.

Dr. Monfort moved that it be the sense of the Assembly that the above papers take effect at the close of the sessions of this Assembly, and that the signers of the 'Declaration and Testimony' continue until then to occupy their seats. *b*

So the paper of Dr. Gurley was adopted, and is as follows:

1. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly does hereby condemn the Declaration and Testimony as a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims, and its adoption by any of our Church courts as an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly.

2. *Resolved*, That the whole subject contemplated in this report, including the report itself, be referred to the next General Assembly.

3. *Resolved*, That the signers of the 'Declaration and Testimony,' and the members of the Presbytery of Louisville who voted to adopt that paper, be summoned, and they are hereby summoned, to appear before the next General Assembly, to answer for what they have done in this matter, and that, until their case is decided, they shall not be permitted to sit as members of any Church court higher than the Session.

4. *Resolved*, That if any Presbytery shall disregard this action of the General Assembly, and at any meeting shall enroll, as entitled to a seat or seats in the body, one or more of the persons designated in the preceding resolution and summoned to appear before the next General Assembly, then that Presbytery shall *ipso facto* be dissolved, and its ministers and elders who adhere to this action of the Assembly are hereby authorized and directed, in such cases, to take charge of the Presbyterial Records, to retain the name, and exercise all the authority and functions of the original Presbytery, until the next meeting of the General Assembly.

5. *Resolved*, That Synods, at their next stated meetings, in making up their rolls, shall be guided and governed by this action of the General Assembly.

In support of this paper, Dr. Gurley read the following reasons for adopting it, which were ordered by the Assembly to be here inserted: *c*

1. Because it condemns in strong, yet just and appropriate terms, the Declaration and Testimony, pronouncing it 'a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims;' which it manifestly is.

2. Because it declares the adoption of the Declaration and Testimony by any of our Church courts to be an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly; which it manifestly is.

3. Because it summons the signers of this Declaration, and the members of the Presbytery of Louisville who voted for its adoption, to appear and answer for their conduct before the General Assembly, the body against whom they have offended, and the only body which, in the present circumstances of the Church, can properly and without embarrassment consider and adjudicate the case.

4. Because it summons them to appear before the *next* Assembly, thus giving them ample time for reflection, for repentance, and for making up their reply.

5. Because, in the meantime, it forbids their sitting in any Church court higher

the Synod of Missouri enrolled, "as entitled to seats in the body," several of the ministers and elders that had signed the Declaration and Testimony, and, out of due respect to all concerned, passed the following resolutions as giving its views in doing so:

"1. *Resolved*, That the *signers* of the Declaration and Testimony are not slanderers, schismatics, and rebels against ecclesiastical authority, but have simply exercised a great Protestant right, and discharged a solemn duty.

than the Session — an abridgment of privilege which we are bound to make, in fidelity to our erring brethren, and to the peace of the Church.

6. Because it saves us from even the appearance of taking action in this case which is too summary and severe. Though we might lawfully dissolve the Presbytery of Louisville at this time, no such great or perilous exigency has arrived as makes such an extraordinary proceeding necessary — nor is it expedient. It is better for the Assembly, better for the Church, and better for all the interests in any way concerned in this case, that justice should be secured and administered *in the ordinary way and by the ordinary methods*.

7. I urge the adoption of this substitute, because it provides that in case any Presbytery shall disregard this action of the Assembly, and permit the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, or those who voted to approve it, to sit in the body as members, that act of rebellion, according to an authoritative declaration of the Assembly, dissolves the Presbytery, and causes its powers to pass at once into the hands of those who respect the highest court of the Church, and are willing to submit to its authority.

8. Finally, in answer to the objection, that the General Assembly has no right to pass beyond the lower courts, and deal with individuals I would say, our *Form of Government* expressly gives to the General Assembly the power 'of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations'; and this clearly implies the power of dealing directly with persons or parties who are engaged in such contentions and disputations."

a The answer to the prayer offered by that eminent and good man may yet be seen, according to the mind of the Lord, and not according to the purpose of the Assembly.

b What condescension! to allow, by a special dispensation, these signers and sinners of the grade of slanderers and schismatics to continue to occupy their seats until the close of the sessions of the Assembly.

c To "the paper of Dr. Gurley," in support of his *ipso facto* resolutions, besides what is presented in the text, this running reply to the reasons, in corresponding numbers, must here suffice:

(1.) "Which it manifestly is" *not*.

(2.) "Which it manifestly is" *not*.

(3.) "Circumstances" cannot, as here pleaded, justify a violation of the express language of the Constitution.

(4.) "Repentance" for having done right — for having conscientiously done a duty — must necessarily be a somewhat stubborn and perverse psychological process, and of the most questionable propriety under any circumstances.

(5.) A suspension of all their rightful functions in all the Church courts of which ministers are ex-officio members, and the imposition of a sweeping disability on elders, in the nature of a punishment for presumed *guilt*, is certainly drawn

"2. *Resolved*, That the Synod, having no evidence that these brethren are not in good and regular standing in their respective Presbyteries and sessions, cannot, without violating the Constitution of the Church, deny them their seats."

There were members of Presbyteries and Synod ready and willing to "adhere to the action of the Assembly," and to avail themselves of whatever color of law attached to the *enabling act* to organize and to supplant "the original" bodies.

with wonderful and most amiable, yet mistaken, *mildness* as "an abridgment of privilege." It is the *right* of ordained office-bearers in the Church to act in their official capacity; and the invasion of a right cannot be confounded with the withdrawment of a privilege. This is to put black for white, and darkness for light.

(6.) Most merciful! The dissolution of a Presbytery involves a mere transfer of its members, in good and regular standing, to other presbyteries, and may be a mere matter of policy or expediency, affecting nobody's character, or standing, or rights. The thing done in this case was *radically different.* It was the institution of *process* against the official and personal character and standing of individual ministers and elders to the number of about 120, *as slanderers and schismatics*, and that, too, *not* "in the ordinary way, and by the ordinary methods," but in a way unparalleled, and by methods forbidden in the Constitution of the Church. (Dis. v., 2, &c.)

(7.) Is the General Assembly the final judge of its own constitutional powers? And for the Synod or Presbytery to question the constitutionality of an "action of the Assembly," does it rightfully incur the guilt of "rebellion," and the penalty of dissolution? This is utterly false. Its statement is its refutation. "And we hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the Church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies." (F. G., viii. 1.) These several "assemblies," or courts, exist by express law, and *each*, by the provisions of that law, has substantive and distinctive powers, which may not be violated, nor absorbed, nor ignored, under any circumstances, by another without doing violence to the constitution and peace of the Church. A lower court or assembly is bound to resist the invasion or subversion of its constitutional powers by the irregular and unconstitutional acts of a higher court.

(8.) The *general* power vested in the General Assembly, by express law, "of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations," *cannot* be pleaded in derogation of the explicit provisions and restrictions of the same organic law as to the *manner* in which that general power shall be exercised. The power here assigned as in other cases is not a naked or discretionary power, but a power hedged in by various metes and bounds—*e. g.*, "*Process against a gospel minister shall always be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member.*" An instrument pretending to the dignity of a constitution which did not define and limit, as well as assign powers, would only receive deserved contempt. "*In rebus modus*"—each thing has its metes and bounds, says the sagacious Horace. But whether he had said so or not, it is eminently true of constitutions.

Henceforth the Assembly recognized only these adherents, and sternly refused to admit commissioners from the Presteries of "*the orginal*" Synod of Missouri.

It appears from this brief summary that the communion of the Synod of Missouri with its General Assembly was broken off, not by any failure on the part of the Synod to maintain the truth in its purity, or to observe all the requirements of the Constitution and standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, unless the act of dissolution was constitutional and of binding force. The untoward thing that eventuated in the unhappy strife and alienation, was a *naked resolution* of the Assembly in derogation, as was believed, of the plainest constitutional prerogatives of the Synod, and of its Presbyteries, ministers, and elders. Certainly no action, manifestly involving such grave consequences, ought ever to be taken on doubtful authority. The action of the General Assembly (O. S.), to which submission was demanded of the Presbyteries of this Synod and of the Synod itself, on pain of *dissolution*, was not a judicial decision on appeal, nor a decision on review and control, nor the result of any other known procedure laid down in, or contemplated by, the Constitution of the Church. Grant that the procedure of the Assembly was a "process" instituted in the sense of the Book, the Book also says in terms, and this is the law of the case: "*Process against a gospel minister shall always be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member;*" and "ALWAYS" does *not* mean sometimes or usually, extraordinary cases being excepted; nor does "entered before the Presbytery of which he *is* a member," mean before the General Assembly of which he is *not* a member. The law of the Church is unequivocal, that a minister can only be reached through his Presbytery, it matters not what the offence, nor when or where committed; and the reason of this is that the immediate church membership of ministers is with the Presbytery; that ministers are not members of the individual churches, nor are they, *ex-officio*, members either of Church sessions or of the General Assembly, but only and solely of Presbytery and Synod. By the organic law of the Presbyterian Church, therefore, their

responsibility is placed primarily where their membership stands, and, therefore, "process" against them "*shall always*" be entered *before the Presbytery*, whether upon its own motion or upon the mandamus of a higher court. If the law be defective, let it be changed in the way provided, but let it not be overridden on the plea of any present necessity. Whilst it exists, and as it exists, it has with us the authority of the Bible itself—it is to us God's word for the case provided; and no Assembly can add to or take from, override or disregard, the Book without incurring "the plagues that are written in this Book." That very action of 1866, fraught with such dire consequences, was, at the time of its passage, deemed of such questionable propriety, so entirely at variance with the Constitution, so unjust and so unwise, that a considerable minority (about forty), many of whom had never signed the "Declaration and Testimony," braved the fiercest obloquy in opposing it, and several decided protests were at once made against it. Never before did a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church venture to claim for its *naked resolutions*, not for a judicial or other decision on review and control, reference, appeal, or complaint, or any other known process laid down by, or contemplated in, the Constitution of the Church, but claim for its *naked resolutions* the imperative and binding force of law, and undertake to compel submission to such acts on pain of exclusion from the communion and fellowship of the Church. Aptly, indeed, it is said in one of the protests admitted to record: "This assumption of power, it seems to us, is a manifest usurpation, and, if it be admitted, will completely revolutionize our Presbyterial system, overthrow our ecclesiastical liberty, and resolve the Assembly into a spiritual despotism." (Concise Record, p. 81.) If the General Assembly wishes its actions to have the force of law, the Book provides the easy and the only way in which that can be done, viz.: "It shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and to receive the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof." (F. G., xii, 6.) In no other way could the General Assembly have acquired the jurisdiction it attempted to exercise, and have removed

the constitutional disability to take such a step as it did. In that memorable case it crowned a series of unparalleled deliverances, extending through six weary years, from 1861 to 1866 inclusive. One of the main reasons for having a Constitution is that it may exert a restraining and conservative influence, and especially protect the rights and interests and character of minorities in such times of trial as those through which we have just passed. It is built for the storm as well as for fair weather.

The simple fact is, and it is important to pronounce it with emphasis, that the act of individually signing the Declaration and Testimony, magnified into such portentous proportions by the General Assembly in 1866, and in the most formal and stately manner denounced as rebellious, schismatical, and slanderous, *never was so much as a disciplinary offense of any grade whatever*. That act was the act of subscribing and publishing, by individual office bearers in the Presbyterian Church, a certain paper known as the Declaration and Testimony. That Declaration and Testimony was *in the nature of a protest*, and nothing more—*a protest* which, in any event, they had an indefeasible right to make, and which, in the given case, they solemnly affirm they do make from a profound sense of duty. No human ingenuity can make anything else out of it. Even Dr. Thomas E. Thomas, the leading spirit in that intolerant Assembly, whilst arguing in support of the exclusion of the commissioners of the Louisville Presbytery, on the ground that they represented *an organized body* that had by a recorded vote approved, and so virtually subscribed, the Declaration and Testimony, conceded that individuals had the right to do so, and ridiculed the mock martyrdom of individuals being willing to suffer for having done the same thing that the Presbytery had done. He did not then think of the happy turn, so prolific of indirection, which things afterward took in the *ipso facto* resolutions, aimed directly at individuals for this very act. "What matters it that individuals," says Dr. T., "here or there may have expressed, in writing or in speeches, public or private, their particular views on this subject? Why, sir, that is one thing. I have

stood, myself, for twenty years, on grounds which I supposed entirely antagonistic to the position of this General Assembly."

The errors in the utterances of the Assemblies (O. S.) from 1861 to 1865, inclusive, against which that "Testimony" is borne, are enumerated under some fourteen distinct heads.

The errors thus enumerated in the Declaration and Testimony (C. R., 121–125,) may be summarized into those respecting: 1. The relations of the Church to the State, and "civil affairs." 2. Slavery. 3. The rule of action. 4. The spirit of intolerance. It is alleged—

1. As to the first of these heads, that the Presbyterian Church was, in violation of her own Constitution, and the fundamental principles of her organization as a spiritual kingdom, put in the false position of "intermeddling" with secular affairs (i); also, by passively assuming the secular obligation of loyalty to a human government and State (ii); also, by criminally acquiescing in the spiritual affairs of the Church being intermeddled with by military and State officials (viii, ix); also, by basing ecclesiastical actions on secular and worldly considerations (vi); also, by allowing the perversion of the office of the ministry and of the pulpit into agencies to subserve political and partizan purposes, against which McPheeters and others resisted in the vain hope that the Assembly would sustain the resistance (xi); also (xiii), by authorizing agents of the Assembly, such as the Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, to sit in judgment upon the real or supposed *political* status and sentiments of good and godly ministers, as furnishing the criterion by which to grant or withhold their support, in the service of the Church, from the funds contributed to the treasury of the Lord.

"Dear Sir—The General Assembly have enjoined the Board to commission no one except of loyal submission to the Government, and to the deliverances of the Church on the subject of slavery.—We are informed your record is not fair, and we decline sending you a commission.

"Yours, truly,

"Thos. L. Janeway,

"*Cor. Secretary, &c.*"

Again:

"Mr. ——— will hardly come up to the requisitions of the last General Assembly. His is *quasi* loyalty, and he is hardly in accord with the Presbyterian Church in its declaims on freedom. It may be hard for him, but he reaps as he has sowed. Such men have well-nigh ruined the Church; and it is hardly expected that loyal men will contribute to support one in affiliation with rebellion.

"Yours, truly,

"T. L. JANEWAY."

(C. R., 69–70.)

Against neither of these men, and I believe they were both members of the Missouri Synod, did even the Argus-eyed military find any real cause of complaint, yet the less tolerant Secretary, in obedience to the political behests of his and your Assembly, forced one of those devoted men out of the ministry, for a time, and into secular employment to support his family. The American Church is in its infancy. "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31.)

Besides all these explicit and specific departures from the spiritual and non-secular character of the Church, viewed in its relations to the State, and as the independent kingdom of Christ which is not of this world, the Assembly (O. S.) by its course of action, in various ways, necessarily implied and assumed, as to the Church and the State, that each might, at discretion, exercise jurisdiction over the affairs of the other. (xiv.)

2. As to the second class of errors, which had respect to slavery, that subject was, when the war broke out, in the attitude of a case settled on avowed principles by various enactments—a *res adjudicata.* But it was re-opened in the heat of the political conflict, and the whole enginery of the Church was reversed in its action upon it; motives of action were attributed to the Southern Church which it explicitly disclaimed and reprobated; violence was done the Assembly's record of the past by the position assigned to the slaves themselves as to the privileges of the gospel; and the theory of radical abolitionists, hitherto esteemed unscriptural and infi-

del, was made a term or test of both ministerial and lay communion. (iv, v, xii.)

3. It was also objected to as an error and fault, that any special interpretation of the current and doubtful events of Providence should be substituted in the place of the certain teachings of the word of God as a rule of action. (vii.)

4. Finally, the *spirit* in which all this was done is deprecated and protested against as violent, revolutionary, destructive, "unjust and cruel." (ix.) "This spirit of persecution seems to have broken over all bounds in the late meeting of the Assembly (1865). The testimony of one of its most influential members, one, too, who acted in perfect harmony with the great mass of that body, is, that 'He had been in many political conventions, yet he must say he never anywhere had seen such relentless persecution as is manifested by this General Assembly.'"

Each head is introduced with the formula: "We testify against;" and, in conclusion, they sum up in the words: "Against each and all of these errors in doctrine and practice we testify: Because they are contrary to the Word of God, and subversive of its inspiration and supreme authority, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice: Because they are contrary to the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church as taught in her Confession, Catechism and Constitution: Because they tend to obliterate all the lines of separation between the civil and ecclesiastical powers: Because they have brought the ministry and the ordinances of religion, and the authority of the Church, into public disrepute: Because they tend to keep up strife and alienation among brethren of a common faith, and thus delay the pacification of the country: And because they are schismatical." "It is, therefore, under a deep conviction of the imperative call made upon us, to bear a clear and unequivocal testimony against this departure of the Church from her ancient faith and order, that we have drawn up, and do now publish, to the world this solemn Declaration and Testimony." "We declare our deliberate purpose, trusting in God, who can save by few as well as by many, to use our best endeavors to bring back the Church of our fathers to her an-

cient purity and integrity, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and under the banner of our only King, Priest and Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this endeavor we pledge ourselves to assist and co-operate with each other." "We have here," it continues, "frankly, openly, and candidly laid before our erring brethren the course we are, by the grace of God, irrevocably determined to pursue. It is our steadfast aim to reform the Church, or so testify against its errors and defections until testimony will be no longer heard. And we commit the issue into the hands of Him, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

Now, to "testify against" any thing is exactly what is meant by Protesting against it, and the document containing this testimony is properly termed a Protest. Such, in the language of the document itself, was its real spirit and avowed purpose, and such was the uniform representation of its purport before the Assembly by its adherents and also by some of its enemies. Alas! the most unfortunate and lamentable fact regarding this famous document is, *that it is so true;* that the facts were so sadly as represented, and that the publication of the errors was undeniable. In the heat of the hour it was denounced by the Assembly, in its answer to a protest (C. R., p. 16), as containing "a vast brood of fatal heresies," and those who uttered it were, by the necessary implication of the first resolution of the action, pronounced rebels, schismatics and slanderers. As a matter of fact, the hostility was against the principles asserted and vindicated, not merely against the style or phraseology in which they were expressed, or the specific applications of those principles. That which was so galling in the assertion of these principles, in any style just then, was that it so glaringly exposed the sudden and violent inconsistency of those who, though they professed to "recognize, affirm and preach" them, had, nevertheless, trampled them under their feet for years as an irresistible majority, and now, intolerant of all opposition, they rashly undertook to crush the minority by destroying their good name and influence.

But, in the face of such grave charges, listen to the calm words of the Rev. Dr. Henry A. Boardman, the most distin-

guished Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia — the city of brotherly love, who was Moderator of the General Assembly, O. S., 1854, and, on the floor of the same Assembly in 1866 uttered these words in opposition to the passage of the *ipso facto* resolutions:

"I would not disparage these issues. These brethren, as it appears to me, have not been fairly and justly dealt with. I had never read that Declaration and Testimony until within the last two or three days, but when I did read it I felt that I had no right to sit here as a judge upon men without reading what they had written, and what had brought them before this court of Christ. The conclusion to which I have come, after a careful reading of this paper, is that there are not five men in this Assembly who will not agree to a very large part of what is contained in that pamphlet. I say, sir, I do not believe that there are more than five men in this Assembly who do not believe a very large part of what is there written. The error of these men is what? Do they stand before you as heretics? Is there any charge against them that they have denied the divinity of our Lord and Savior, or justification by faith, or any other thing that enters into our Calvinistic system? Not a word of it. Is there any charge that they have been unfaithful in their work? They stand before us untarnished, and as perfectly unimpeachable as any other men in this Assembly. What is their offence? *Their offence is that they asserted principles which we all recognize, affirm and preach.* They have set forth views of the distinction between the secular and spiritual powers, between the jurisdiction of the churches and the state. Some of these views are undoubtedly too highly colored, but is that a capital offence? Is it an unpardonable sin? However wrong they may be, I believe they are honest men. If they have carried that principle to an extreme, is it an offence so gross that they shall not be allowed time for reflection and for reconsideration? Must it needs be that the authority of this court is to be brought down upon them with all its unmitigated severity for this offence? It has never been before the General Assembly of our Church to pass upon such vast interests as are here involved, and upon the ecclesiastical status and reputation of ministers of the gospel with this fatal haste? Are you not willing to extend to those men the clemency that you extend to other men?"

And, in a protest against the *ipso facto* resolutions, offered by this same distinguished, impartial and unimpeachable wit-

ness, wherein several joined him, it is said: "No one has charged them with heresy or immorality. The principles affirmed in their pamphlet are substantially the principles incorporated in our Confession of Faith, and held by our whole Church. They believed that several General Assemblies had violated these principles, and especially that the Assembly of 1865 had undertaken to impose certain laws upon the Church in derogation of the plain provisions of our Constitution. In this belief they are sustained by the Synods of New Jersey and Philadelphia, by several Presbyteries, and by numerous ministers and laymen of the Church." (C. R., p 82.) It is, however, an oversight to say that men "summoned" and "suspended" as schismatics and slanderers had not been charged with heresy and immorality; but it is only in the act thus summoning and suspending them that they are so charged. Outside of that act, the statement is strictly true, and that must be what was meant.

Now, as to the *principles* of the Declaration and Testimony Protest, which "Dr. Boardman pointedly declared he did not believe there were five men in the Assembly who would refuse to indorse," having been expressed in language "too highly colored," let the following unanswerable statement in the speech of Rev. Dr. J. H. Brookes be considered:

"Is the protest contained in the Declaration and Testimony, and adopted by the Presbytery of Louisville, presented in a spirit and form justified by the necessities of the case? Mr. Moderator, in answer to this inquiry it might be sufficient to state that we all listened attentively to the lengthy report of the committee on this villified document. That committee had it long under consideration, and doubtless scanned it carefully and anxiously, to discover every objectionable expression which it might contain. And what did they find? Nothing; nothing, sir, after their laborious research, that can fairly be construed into disrespect to this venerable Assembly. Even the score of extracts which have been read in your presence, and which I can easily show to be cruelly garbled, did not present a phrase or word which struck me as discourteous. It may be owing to my ignorance of the "fatal imposture and force of words," or my want of a refined and cultivated taste, but I confess I cannot see any reason for all this uproar about

the violent language employed in the paper now before this House. Gentlemen may rave and rage as they denounce its fierce and vituperative style, and invoke 'the hot thunderbolts of hell to strike us dumb and to strike us dead,' but they will come much nearer to something that is tangible when they are kind enough to point out the expressions that are so disrespectful as to justify our expulsion from the Church."

He continues:

"It is a remarkable fact that in a debate extending through two weeks, not even one speaker from the majority has touched the merits of the question before the House, either by attempting to expose the unsoundness of the principles contained in the Declaration and Testimony, or the impropriety of the language in which these principles are embodied. We have had denunciation without measure, but not a word of argument or proof. I submit, sir, that the accusers have utterly failed to make out their case, even on the ground of disrespectful terms employed in the paper for which they have been arraigned at your bar." (C. R., 70.)

He then reviews numerous other Protests, mostly by Church Courts, and shows that the Declaration and Testimony uses "language far less offensive to good taste, and far less disrespectful to the General Assembly, than that which others have been permitted to employ with impunity."

And, here are confirmatory words, never answered, from Rev. Dr. Van Dyke:

No, sir, my objection to this whole proceeding is, that it is partial. Why, a stranger coming in here might suppose that these brethren are sinners above all men, when it is perfectly notorious that men high in position in the Church, have, from the beginning, protested against the proceedings of the General Assembly in language quite as strong as any of these gentlemen ever used. Sixty-one members of the General Assembly — sixty-one, I think the number is correct — with Dr. Hodge at their head, said the deliverance of the General Assembly was "unconstitutional, a usurpation of Christ's prerogative, cruel and unjust." Is there anything stronger than that in the Declaration and Testimony? It is perfectly notorious that in the Synods of Baltimore and New York — especially in the cities — the orders of the General Assembly have not been attempted to be carried out. I do not know a man in the region of the church from which I come that will consent

to carry out these orders; and further, it is well known in the Presbytery to which I belong—and who, with the full knowledge of that fact, sent me here — that I have not only refused to carry out this order, but have openly said I would not, on the high ground that I owe an allegiance to Jesus Christ, and upon the further ground that, according to the Constitution of the Church, this General Assembly has no authority to make such an order." (C. R., 7.)

In these extracts the matter and the language of the protest find vindication against the extravagant misconceptions and misrepresentations of both. And, in this connection, it should be borne in mind that the Declaration and Testimony Protest was *not* written for record on the Minute Book of the General Assembly, and it was never offered or asked that it should be placed there, nor did it ever pretend to be a *technical* protest, made under the limitation of the Book, that "none can join in a protest against a decision of any judicatory, excepting those who had a right to vote in said decision"—*i. e.*, it never was and never claimed to be *a protest of record*, as making up part of the record of a decision or transaction of a Church Court; but it was, as it professed to be, a protest in the general and historic sense of being a Declaration and Testimony against certain errors of the Assembly, addressed to the people of God, and commended to the consideration and approbation of Ministers, Elders, Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods. And yet we have seen that technical Protests have gone to record under the rule that they must be "couched in decent and respectful language," and that "it is perfectly notorious that men high in position in the Church have, from the beginning, protested against the proceedings of the General Assembly, *in language quite as strong as any of these gentlemen have used.*"

The origin and signing of that famous and valuable paper, known as the Declaration and Testimony, were of themselves an assurance that it was couched in only such language as befitted a gentleman in vindication of truth and righteousness. The origin was on this wise: The General Assembly of 1865, which met in Pittsburg, Pa., in the month of May, after the surrender of Gen. Lee, required of Presbyteries and Sessions,

as a measure of ecclesiastical reconstruction, that all applicants for membership from the rebellious States should formally renounce, as sins against God, and profess repentance of, as a condition or term of admission to membership, certain opinions and conduct touching political questions and issues, and lying in the domain of "civil affairs," which were erected into terms of ministerial and lay communion, and that, too, not as universally applicable, but only as applicable to the Southern States, when it was well known that men of the same political views were in the Church North as well as South. The radical and unconstitutional character of this action was aggravated by various circumstances, but especially by the fact that it crowned a series of like deliverances from 1861 onward.

At this crisis, when a burden was laid on the consciences of men by Church Courts, such as Christ never authorized, and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church forbade, four men met in the study of a Presbyterian pastor of Brooklyn, N. Y., and prayed and consulted as to what was best to be done. These four men were Rev. J. H. Brookes, D. D., and Edward Bredell, Elder, of St. Louis; Rev. S. R. Wilson, D. D., of Louisville, and Rev. H. J. VanDyke, D. D., of Brooklyn. Dr. VanDyke noted down the points of the consultation, and it fell to the lot of another to put the matter in shape.

It is now well known that that other person—*i. e.*, the writer of the paper known as the Declaration and Testimony —was the Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Wilson, one of the pastors of Louisville — a distinguished Christian *gentleman* and scholar, and the peer, not only in the love of truth and of true Presbyterianism, but in the graces of æsthetic taste and the proprieties of rhetoric and logic, of any who have assailed that "immortal document,"—and those 119 names that signed that instrument and acquiesced in its language, as expressing the simple truth, in all earnestness, are the peers of any who have poured the vials of their fastidious wrath on this witness. It is an old game to attack your enemy by way of defending yourself, which may sometimes do in war, but never in logic, while dealing with tried veterans. The hint of a wary barrister, "If you have no case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney," may

serve the purpose of getting a verdict or a vote for those who battle for victory, but time will be sure to dissolve the sophism into thin air at the touch of the Ithuriel spear of those who do battle for the truth as delivered to the saints.

How could there have been any "slander" in such a document as we have already seen it to be, except upon the legal paradox, the greater the truth the greater the slander; but, unfortunately even for that plea, the General Assembly has no *private*, but only a public character, and there is no principle of estoppel known to the Presbyterian standards by which the truth itself, on grave ecclesiastical issues, can be excluded from the ear of the Church and refused a public hearing, be it expressed in however earnest and homely Saxon.

> "But error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amidst its worshipers."

Schism is the rending of the visible Church into parts, but the guilt of it rests, not on those who vindicate the truth in never so homely phrase, but on the adherents and promoters of error in however specious and gilded a form and manner. Rebellion proper, like treason, involves the question of sovereignty; but the Church knows no king but "one Jesus," and no rebellion or treason except against his spiritual sovereignty. "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight." It is simply grotesque to clothe an erring council with attributes and prerogatives which belong alone to "God our Savior."

No, the Synod of Missouri has no occasion to hang her head or to cover her face in shame, as having compromised her submission to the standards of the Church, for having resolved that she could not "deny them their seats," who joined in this earnest proclamation of the truth against prevailing error. These men, thus summoned and suspended, never were, upon any defensible theory of their case, guilty of any disciplinary offense whatever; and the Synod would have been false to every principle of honor amongst brethren, treacherous to the ordination "promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truth of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that

account," and faithless to the Head of the Church, had she refused to bear with them their burden and reproach, and to throw around those of them who were her own members the mighty shield of her protection, her prayers and her sympathies, against the cruel and lawless sentence suspended over them. Any other course would have been execrable for its unspeakable meanness. The *injury* inflicted on the good name of these six score office bearers amongst the Churches, from a temporary exclusion holding them up to public suspicion, reproach and scorn, as though *probably* guilty of high crime, was *scarcely less* than the injury from a sentence of total and final exclusion from their offices and membership in the Church. It was, under the circumstances, a virtual condemnation before trial—the pronouncing and executing of sentence and proceeding after the long, slow interval of a year "to examine and decide."

The record of your Synod in this matter sheds imperishable lustre on her name. There is a virtual confession of this in the subsequent course of the General Assembly (O. S.) itself, for although it sternly ignored your Synod's existence, dropped its name from the roll, and numbered you among the dead and dissolved, yet that Assembly never proceeded to the extent of carrying into execution the *ipso facto* decree against any of the six score individual offenders summoned so sternly and relentlessly to its bar; nor even against any Church courts in all the length of the land, except in Kentucky and Missouri. Indeed, it seemed almost certain, when this decree was passed, that it would give occasion to the dissolution of the Synods of those two States, as a mild and Christian method (sic?) of church reconstruction in the border States, as the signers were mostly within their bounds. However, the Assembly was "hoist by its own petard" in the apparently unanticipated dissolving act of the Nassau Presbytery, Brooklyn, New York. That Presbytery, *ipso facto*, enrolled and admitted to a seat an elder who had signed the terrific Declaration and Testimony, just the same as had elder Johns. The mighty Synod of New York was involved. The attention of the General Assembly was called, not only by review and control, but also by a dis-

tinct motion, to this state of facts, but no attention was paid to it. The mere *fact* of enrolling the name, according to the decree, of itself operated the *dissolution*, and the Assembly, on learning the fact, was in consistency and *in honor* and *in duty bound*, either to treat the disobedient body as the St. Louis Presbytery and the Missouri Synod and others in Kentucky and Missouri were treated, or to repeal the offensive and unequal action, and repair the damage it had done. And, then, as to the individuals summoned, the next Assembly utterly failed and refused to go into "their case," either to "examine" or to "decide." An appearance was put in and trial demanded, but it was refused. The failure of those summoned to appear in any process, the Book distinctly provides, does not arrest their case, or authorize the Assembly to enter a *nolle prosequi*, but only aggravates by adding contumacy to the alleged offense, and thereby intensifies the penalty to be meted out.

A great wrong was done the Synod of Missouri, and she has only stood, as in duty bound, in self-defense—rather, in defense of the truth and of the right, and of constitutional Presbyterianism. The Presbyterian world is your debtor.

But why pursue this aspect of the case any further, as the spectacle it reveals to us, view it from what point we may, is most painful and humiliating; and a feeling little less than one of sadness is experienced at any attempt to justify or extenuate such "miserable doings" on the part of a great, grave, historic body, such as was the Old School General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Its glorious sun went down under a cloud. *Requiescat in pace!*

PART II.

The main thing in mind, at the very outset of this Letter, was to consider, as briefly as the case would allow, the present relations of the Synod of Missouri, and the duties that arise therefrom. Our relations, not only as individuals, but as church organizations, determine our duties. Some relations are permanent, and the duties arising therefrom, are likewise

permanent; some relations and their corresponding duties are contingent, variable, and transient. The relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, originate certain duties; but should the wife, or the child, or both, die, the peculiar duties of husband and parent would cease with the cessation of the corresponding relations. Other relations, as those of the soul to God, are *permanent*, and so also are the duties arising therefrom. This is a fundamental principle in ethics, and has a valuable application to the case in hand. The relations of the Synod of Missouri are primarily to the truth as revealed in God's word, and as expressed in the standards of the Presbyterian Church. These standards rest entirely on the Holy Scriptures. The duties arising out of this relation to the truth of God are fixed by God himself, and cannot be ignored or violated without great criminality. The very essence of Christian liberty consists in our freedom from the interposition or mediation of any human authority, in Church or State, between us and God. We accept our Presbyterian standards, not as of human origin and authority, but as drawn out of the word of God, and as being to us, as a Church, his own word in a practical and systematised form. Hence the intolerableness of any church court or Assembly assuming to exercise powers not recognized by the standards or powers from which it is restrained by them.

Now how stands your case? How stands your Synod in relation to the truth?

"Does the Old School Synod of Missouri stand for anything as against the Northern or Southern Assembly? Does it embody any principle, vital to the Christian commonwealth, that they do not? Is it, as a Presbyterian organization, the *sole* custodian of any truth of high value in the ecclesiastical constitution? If it should unite with the Assembly North, or the Assembly South, would it alienate any trust that could not safely be committed to the Church into which it would be merged? Could it be assured that all the vital ends of its own existence would in that case be realized?

"No church has any right to *be* unless it stands for something. It must embody and conserve some truth, some prin-

ciple, some great matter of Christian interest that no other Church does, or it has no just title to existence. It must be charged with some portion of God's work that no one else is at hand to do, and that no one else can be trusted with, or its presence among the Churches is an intrusion and an impertinence. But if it have in hand some great work that no one else can be trusted with, then its existence is not only justified, but imperative. To alienate its existence is to betray its trust. Its members cannot disorganize it without incurring guilt. God holds them to account for the work he has given them to do, and they cannot destroy the body which is the instrument provided by the Head of the Church for doing it.

"This is the test by which the question of union must be tried."

This extract is taken, with slight variation, from the Southern Review, April, 1872, in a discussion of the question of the reunion of the M. E. Churches, North and South, well worthy of attention by those interested in your situation. It is my information that it was written by one of the Bishops of that Church, resident in Missouri, and greatly respected by you all.

It is believed that the criterion here laid down will commend itself to your best judgments as sound, and of general utility. Its application to the facts of your case is not difficult. What, then, is the precious and peculiar treasure which your Synod is guarding? What is the special trust respecting which it should be careful to give a good account of its stewardship? It may be compressed within a single sentence, viz.: *The subordination and fidelity of the Church Courts, and especially of the General Assembly, to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.* This embraces all. No change is sought in those standards, but fidelity and submission to them, in their well understood and true sense. It has only been against departures from, and violations of, those standards in the administration of the affairs of the Church, that the Synod of Missouri has testified. There is no need of going into detail, nor is it practicable in this connexion. Those standards are simple and explicit in excluding politics from the Church, and in excluding the Church from the sphere of poli-

† By Bishop Marvin

tics, as well as from that of general science; they prescribe to the Church her appropriate and peculiar spiritual work, and provide for the decent and orderly performance of it. Neither the General Assembly, nor any other assembly, is competent to change the standards by adding to, or taking from, or ignoring their provisions. These standards make up what is meant by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and that Constitution is to us the medium, and the sole medium, as the simple and accepted exposition of God's Word, through which the General Assembly receives power from Christ, and according to which, without any infallibility or inspired discretion, that power is to be exercised. When (F. G., xii.*) it is laid down as a radical principle of Presbyterian Church Government "that *a majority shall govern*," the necessary limitation is, *govern* in subordination to the Book or Constitution, and as it prescribes. Any other view renders the Constitution a mockery and a snare, and resolves the government of the Church, not into the calm judgment of the majority, as to the meaning and requirements of a written and accepted Constitution, but into the arbitrary, irresponsible and capricious utterances of expediency and discretion, to the utter destruction of all order in the Church, as would be the result of a like course in the State. And the language only appropriate to regulated society would be deceptively applied to what would be virtually the acts of a lawless mob. (See Con. F., ch. I., 1 and 6, and chs. XXIII, XXV., XXX and XXXI; Form G., chs. I., ii., VIII—XII., XIII., 1, XIV., 1, &c.; The Discip., ch. I., 1, &c.; The Directory.)

To the extent that the followers of Christ agree in doctrine and Church order, and especially to the extent that those who receive the same standards agree as to the sense and application of those standards, so as to be able to dwell together in unity and peace, and to coöperate in the labors of the gospel, exempt from strife and confusion, there is great strength, comfort and encouragement in union, and also in wealth and numbers. But any organic ecclesiastical union, in the present state of *Ecclesiology*, except as it is based on harmonious views of the doctrines of grace, and of the nature, power and duties

of the Church and Church courts, it is humbly submitted, tends to forfeit the consummation so devoutly desired of the ultimate unification of Christians as one visible Church, and must be rather a source of weakness and warring than of power and peace. The laboratory illustration of procuring and keeping the elements pure and unadulterated, in order to an ultimate perfect combination of such as are endued with proper affinities, is pertinent here.

Now, as to any contemplated Assembly relation by your Synod, it is not forgotten that the question has just been before your Presbyteries at their spring meetings, and that the report of their action has been made to this Synod; and, also, that it is known that a majority of the Presbyteries decided against the formation of an Assembly connexion. Under all ordinary circumstances, surely this ought to settle the matter; and some impatience at any farther consideration of the subject, for the present, seemed very natural. But, really, it seems that the present case was not an ordinary one; for the peace and repose from all agitation which the action of the Presbyteries contemplated were, before your meeting, denied the churches. Indeed, the whole question of Synodical relations was unexpectedly disturbed and unsettled by several circumstances that could not have been readily anticipated. The General Assembly, North, in answer to an overture from the commissioners of one of the Synods of Iowa, "looking toward Christian fellowship, and a more fraternal union with that body known as the Independent Synod of Missouri," "*Resolved*, That we cherish a deep and heartfelt sympathy with all Christians of the Presbyterian name and faith, desiring to be brought upon grounds of closer union with the same, and that we are ever ready cordially to welcome all such to our ecclesiastical fellowship, on conditions mutually acceptable." "A committee of three was appointed to visit the Synod [of Missouri], consisting of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., Rev. Robert Patterson, D. D., and Hon. H. Humphrey Leavitt." (Min. pp., 70, 71.) It is no fault of any members of your Synod, therefore, that the question is thus opened

again. This circumstance, however, does help to show how precarious was your peace—almost anybody could disturb it.

This committee, of course, can bring to the notice of the Synod nothing new, as the actions of the body they represent are published and known to your body, and this committee is not authorized nor competent to modify nor to construe those acts with any special authority whatever.

Your Synod stands free and untrammelled in choosing her relations. The record shows this. It says: "The two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church having both been in due form *dissolved* on Friday, Nov. 12, 1869, [Pittsburg, Pa.] a *Joint Convention* was held," and adopted certain resolutions, the preamble of which begins in these words: 'In the Providence of God, the two branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, after a separation of more than thirty years, *are again united.*"

In this transaction we behold the union of the two Assemblies accomplished, and the expiring act of the General Assembly (O. S.) with which the Synod of Missouri was formerly connected. On the final *dissolution* of that Assembly your Synod, of course, ceased to be under any obligations and duties arising out any relations thereto. "For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Since 1866, for three years, your relations to the General Assembly were recognized by you, and your rights therein were claimed, and a willingness was expressed to discharge all constitutional duties consequent; but your claims were denied and ignored. For three years, since November 12, 1869, your Synod has been an Independent and separate body, with no taint of schism upon it. Whilst that Assembly existed, your Synod had covenanted with God to seek its recovery from certain grievous departures from the standards of the Church. Since the final dissolution of that body, your Synod has been able to breathe more freely; it has in fact been, and without dispute, an independent body, and that *sans reproche.* As long as that Assembly existed the Synod

still continued to recognize it as its Assembly, and to testify against its supposed errors, as a matter of right and duty, if God peradventure might recover it, and commissioners were not forbidden to claim their seats on its floor. But even suppose the Synod did recognize the Assembly (O. S.) to the last, although the Assembly persistently, but with growing improvement of temper, refused to recognize the Synod, yet it would not follow that the Synod can now wisely and properly enter into a relation with another body where the errors are no greater, perhaps, in large part, only the same as those in the body from which she declined to avow a total separation, and with which, in fact, she claimed to be in relation, and in which she asserted her *right* of representation to the end. Certain differences and difficulties which may not justify a total separation or schism, may, nevertheless be an insuperable barrier in the way of newly forming a union. The Assembly (O. S.) did not succeed in dissolving the Synod of Missouri, but it did succeed in dissolving itself; and since that dissolution the whole matter of union has become an original question with the Synod of Missouri. The wife may know traits in the character of her husband which would certainly have prevented her from marrying him at the first, had she known them when she was single and free to choose her relations for life, but which would not at all justify her in seeking a divorce—*a separation a vinculo.* After having once formed a relation, things may and ought to be borne in peace and patience, which, prior to the formation of the relation, would have been good and constraining reasons for not entering into the relation at all. The existence, now, in an Assembly, of the errors against which you testified, but from which you did not separate, might be a sufficient reason for declining to join such Assembly in organic relation, and entering upon a new career of protest. Indeed, you are not wanted unless accordant in views. You will observe that the language controlling the appointment of this committee to visit your Synod very properly says: "We are ready, cordially, to welcome all such *to* our ecclesiastical fellowship *on conditions mutually acceptable.*" Do such condition exist? *i. e.*, Are the conditions of the North-

ern Assembly acceptable to *you?* The appointment of this committee contemplates your forming organic relations with the Northern Assembly. And why not? Can any good and sufficient reason be given why this union should not take place? Well, the answer ought to be satisfactory and not difficult.

A criterion was laid down above for determining this matter, and now let us apply it. *If the Synod can discharge her special trust in that connection better than she can independent or in any other relation, the union should be consummated without delay.* We have seen that the Synod of Missouri has "a trust," and that it consists mainly in upholding the *principle*, that the Presbyterian Church is not governed by canons nor by canon law, but by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies; that these assemblies do not govern by virtue of any inherent power, but that they exist and are constituted by express law; that they are not at liberty to legislate for themselves or the Church, but are subject to that express law at all times and under all circumstances; that that law is the Constitution or organic law of the Church; and that the standards of the Church, (viz., The Confession of Faith, The Catechisms, The Form of Government, The Discipline and Directory, which make up that Constitution,) are drawn out of the word of God, the Holy Scriptures being the only rule of faith and manners and the revealed will of God, as interpreted in the standards of the Church, the only foundation for the exercise of any authority within or over the Presbyterian Church, or any part thereof. It is not enough that this subjection of the courts of the Church be implied, or simply politic and verbal, or theoretical; it must be open, actual and practical, and for conscience sake, as an obedience to the Word, even "the Head of the Church." "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ." 'This Constitution of the Church is in the nature of a charter covenant, under which franchises are enjoyed and property vested for the maintenance of a certain system of doctrine and order, and the claim to exercise powers not assigned, or in a way other than as prescribed, involves a

breach of this covenant, in which all acquiesce in joining the body; it also involves dishonest dealing in temporal things with those who have joint interest under the charter.' Such are, substantially, the general doctrines of the Church, and the general principles of the Constitution for which this Synod and its Presbyteries have testified during the recent struggle with its own General Assembly. They are manifestly fundamental in the system of Presbyterianism. (D. P., 90.) They are inherent in its very organization; they are vital and must be omnipresent throughout all its parts, manifesting their life-sustaining and controlling influence in the highest as in the lowest assembly and court, in the highest and most honored as in the lowliest and humblest member, or decay will set in and feebleness result, and even the death of apostacy may be the final doom. Surely I do not misconceive nor misstate the case, nor do I exaggerate the tremendous importance of the *idea*, that the continued existence of the Presbyterian Church, as a distinct Christian organization, depends on the subordination of the courts of the Church to its Constitution. The General Assembly has no more right or power to change that Constitution by its sole action, or to act outside of it, or contrary to it, or other than as it prescribes, than the Congress of the United States has to act in like manner with reference to the Constitution of the United States. In either case such conduct would be in its sphere revolutionary and destructive of the existing order of things. If the Constitution of the Church needs changing, let it be done in a lawful way; but no exigency or necessity, military or otherwise, can be pleaded in justification of any departure from it, or infraction of it, as it exists.

It was by conduct of this revolutionary, insubordinate and destructive character, as it is believed, that the General Assembly (O. S.) broke up the relations of your Synod to it, misled the civil courts to divest it of property, created a discordant element by misguiding some of its own members, erected on the same territory a rival Synod, and, though failing to bring you into subjection to the new order of things, and notwithstanding your prayers and efforts "to reform the

Church or testify against its errors, until testimony should be no longer heard" (Oct. 1869), that Assembly, up to the time of its dissolution (Nov. 12, 1869), continued as a body to adhere to its false position. The testimony of your Synod in that direction is now of course closed and no longer of any avail, but yet it was a work of faith and duty, although the duties resting on your Synod respecting that Assembly now no longer exist. The record is made up and is on high.

But what is the duty of the Synod of Missouri toward the new body styled the Northern Assembly, into which our old Assembly was merged, and whose committee visited you? The fact is that this body holds the property wrested from you, embraces the Synod erected to displace you, and has in a most unequivocal manner likewise entered on the possession and use, as the legitimate and sole heir, of the doctrine of the "Assembly's omnipotence." The evidence of the last statement will appear conclusive on a brief review of facts, and I ask special attention to it: My point is that the General Assembly (North) has squarely, distinctly, unequivocally and conspicuously placed itself upon the theory that the General Assembly is the judge of the constitutionality of its own acts; that the constitutionality of its acts is not to be called in question. If the *principle*, that the acts of the General Assembly are final when civil rights respecting property, franchises and the like are drawn into question by those acts, so as to preclude all inquiry by the civil court, is once accepted and and allowed to emerge into practical operation, there is no power left to stay its assertion of finality over all ecclesiastical affairs. This principle the Assembly, North, accepts and asserts. Let us look at the facts in evidence.

It will be remembered that in the ever-memorable St. Louis meeting of the O. S. General Assembly, 1866, the case of the Walnut Street Church, Louisville, Ky., made its appearance, and was disposed of in such a novel manner as to call forth a protest from some slow members. That action was followed by litigation, both in the State and United States Courts. At the last regular meeting of the O. S. Assembly prior to its dissolution a committee was appointed, of which Dr. Hum-

phreys was chairman, to take charge of this Walnut Street Church "case," "and for the necessary expenses of said case in the court from which, and in the court to which it had been appealed, said committee was authorized to draw on the Board of. Publication for a sum not exceeding five thousand dollars." (Minutes 1869, p. 943, and Supp., 1186.) The Walnut Street Church case, Watson vs. Jones, 13 Wallace, was decided by the Supreme Court of the United States this spring (1872), and the *rule* laid down, as governing the decision, is: "*That, whenever the questions of discipline, or of faith, or of ecclesiastical rule, custom or law, have been decided by the highest of these Church judicatories to which the matter has been carried, the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final, and as binding on them in their application to the case before them.*" It is noted that Chief Justice Chase did not sit on the argument of this case, and took no part in its decision, and that Justices Clifford and Davis dissented, leaving six out of the nine members of that highest court of the land as concurring in the opinion delivered by Justice Miller.

It will be observed that the decision by the United States Supreme Court of this Kentucky case (Watson vs. Jones) differs somewhat from the two decisions of the Supreme Court of Missouri in which your Synod has been interested. In the first of those cases (Watson vs. Farris) the opinion of the Court was delivered by Judge Wagner. "Vacancies in the Board of Trustees of Lindenwood College were, by the terms of its charter, to be filled by a Presbytery in connection with the General Assembly (O. S.)" In September, 1866, after the formal meeting of the St. Louis Presbytery for the transaction of business, "and after the roll had been called, and the absentees noted by the clerk, Mr. Niccolls protested against the admission of John J. Johns to a seat in the body, on the ground that he was a signer of the Declaration and Testimony." *Held* that a Presbytery so dissolved — *i. e.*, for enrolling a signer of that paper contrary to the *ipso facto* order — had no power to appoint Trustees of Lindenwood College. The simple fact of enrolling Johns operated an abrogation of

the rights and legal functions of the Presbytery, the protest of Niccolls having no other effect than simply to call attention to the fact of enrolling as stated.

The ground on which the Court thus decides is that the General Assembly has unlimited control, "legislative, judicial and executive," over "the concerns of the whole Church," and, whether a case is regularly or irregularly before it, is a subject for it to determine for itself; and no civil court can revise, modify or impair its action in a matter of *merely ecclesiastical concern.* Now, although this Board of Trustees was created and perpetuated in great part to hold and use the property of Lindenwood College, yet the court utterly denied that the *title* to the property was involved or drawn into question, and hence insisted that the matter in issue was wholly and only ecclesiastical; and the Court concedes that *if* the title to the property had been in question, the rule would be different. In the language of the Court: "*In matters of litigation, where the title to property comes in contest, the rule would be different.*" Certainly the decree of the Court, as a matter of fact, immediately divested "the original Presbytery" of St. Louis of all available interest in and control over a property which it had hitherto held by its trustees. It looks very much as though the real question, therefore, was, as the decision resulted in determining, which of two parties before the Court should, according to law, hold the "title to property." The *holding* of the title—not its *validity* — was unquestionably the precise thing "in contest"; and as the holding carries with it all the use and benefit of the property — all that gives the title *value* — it was an *error* of the Court, even upon its own ruling, to throw out the case as *purely ecclesiastical.* A purely ecclesiastical case would be one where no vested civil right is drawn into question, or made dependent thereon: whether a belief of the divinity of Christ shall be a term of communion, or a condition of licensure or ordination to preach, is purely ecclesiastical, as the function conferred or withheld is purely spiritual. But the chartered franchise of appointing trustees to hold the legal title of a property of valuable uses, has dependent on its exercise the

enjoyment of chartered rights. The trust and confidence were, in the case in question, really reposed in "the original Presbytery" of St. Louis, which body, by its appointees, held the legal title to the College, provided that Presbytery was still in connexion, as the charter required, with the General Assembly (O. S.) Was that connexion ever legally broken up? Was "the *ipso facto* ordinance" "regular, and the deprivation lawful"? Could an unconstitutional, lawless "edict" of the Assembly dissolve a Presbytery or anything else in the eye of the law, unless, perhaps, the body making it? It would seem that some strange mist covered from view this property as the very thing "in contest"; and, by the statement of the Court, had this point, which was the very heart of the controversy, been recognized, the ruling would have been "different." It might then have been considered, the Court observed, "necessary to look behind the *ipso facto* ordinance to see whether *it* was regular." Nothing so effectually hid this point from view as the pre-occupation of the mind of the Court by an utterly erroneous and *fanciful theory of Presbyterian Church Government*, and of the General Assembly as an executive, legislative and judicial body, acting upon all the affairs of the Church "with unlimited control."—It requires no legal prophet to conjecture that some legal process may yet recover Lindenwood to "the original Presbytery," not only as giving Presbytery its rights, but as giving consistency to the court itself.

In the subsequent case, March term, 1871, (not yet in Reports, October, 1872),* Watson *vs.* Garvin, opinion of same (Supreme)

* Since in type I learn that Watson *vs.* Garvin is set down to be reargued. My quotations of the opinion of Judge Bliss are taken from that opinion as published in the *Old School Presbyterian.* There appear to be only two points in the case: 1. Whether there is any *implied* trust in the church court above the individual congregation—a strictly legal question to be settled by the general *doctrine of implied trusts;* and 2. If such trust can be found, then did the *ipso facto* action destroy "the original Presbytery," and constitutionally supplant it by another Presbytery? Every principle of sound reasoning applicable to the case, and the bearing of the legal position of the Supreme Court of Missouri, properly interpreted, must be against the *ipso facto* action as ever having had any such legal effect. And, then, the St. Charles Church remains in undisturbed relation to "the original Presbytery," to which, as of old, the implied trust, if there be such a trust in the ease, must necessarily still continue to run.

court, by Judge Bliss, The First Presbyterian Church of St. Charles held its property upon no express condition in relation to its ecclesiastical connection; and hence the Assembly party were denied their claim, on the ground that nothing had occurred to draw the title, thus unrestricted, into question. But the court argues, as in the former case, that if property rights had been in question, the Assembly decision would *not* have been accepted as final. In that case the court says: "It might, perhaps, have been necessary to look behind the *ipso facto* ordinance to see whether it was regular, and the deprivation lawful." And summing up an extensive survey of cases, the court (Bliss, J.), says: "In all the cases we find it firstly (first?) everywhere taken for granted, and must necessarily be so under our system, that upon matters purely ecclesiastical, *not affecting property rights*, the decisions of the proper church judicature are conclusive upon civil tribunals." And again: "Upon ecclesiastical matters each (church) must decide for itself. *But no man, or association of men, can be deprived of property except by the hand of the law.* It is true that trusts pertaining to property held for ecclesiastical uses will be protected like other trusts."

It will be observed, on a comparison of these different decisions, that the Supreme Court of the United States has gone beyond the Supreme Court of Missouri, by laying it down as a *rule*, that where even the rights of property directly depend upon the action of the highest ecclesiastical court of any church, the civil court, in trying those rights, will not go back of that action to inquire whether it is or is not in accordance with the constitution of the body to which the rival claimants belong. With Presbyterians that highest court is the General Assembly, under all ordinary circumstances, and as the Book provides, so that it is here ruled and decided by the highest court of the land, that the civil courts must accept the decisions of the Assembly as final and not to be questioned, even when property depends thereon. In the Missouri cases the Supreme Court laid down the doctrine, as a rule, that in purely ecclesiastical cases, but *not* in others, the decision of the ecclesiastical court is final *quoäd* the civil courts, and mis-

took the Lindenwood case as purely ecclesiastical; whereas, the United States Supreme Court *held* that in *all cases* the ruling of the ecclesiastical court is ultimate.

The General Assembly, we have seen, took part in this Kentucky case, thus decided on appeal, and bore the expense of it. Now, observe, in the Minutes (pp. 52–53) of the United Assembly that met at Detroit this spring (1872), we have the final report of the committee appointed in 1869, and learn that a part of the drafts on the treasury, in meeting the expenses of this case, were paid by the United Assembly; that the opinion of the court is published, by order, in full in the Appendix of the Minutes; that a committee is appointed to prepare an abstract of it for publication in the new Digest; and that a still further expression of approbation of, and of satisfaction with, that opinion is given in these words: "The General Assembly will not be slow to appreciate the value of this opinion in the protection which it affords to the liberties of a free church, and to the funds which may be entrusted to the Assembly and to its congregations for pious uses."

Undoubtedly the Assembly has succeeded in enlisting the tremendous influence of this high court in favor of that view of the supremacy of the General Assembly against which your Synod has, in the most explicit terms, for many years protested; but we cannot forget that both the courts and the Assembly have changed positions on this important subject. The decision of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, on the division of the Presbyterian Church of 1837, has been regarded hitherto with great respect. This case (The Commonwealth *vs.* Green, 4 Warton,) was viewed by the General Assembly (O. S.) as of special value. Let Dr. Thomas E. Thomas state how matters stood: "The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania," says he, "decided in our (General Assembly, O. S.,) favor, on the ground that the General Assembly, in these acts (dissolving the Plan of Union, etc.,) had not transcended its constitutional authority. The question with that court, speaking through Chief Justice Gibson, was not whether the Assembly did right or wrong, in a moral point of view, for that they were answerable to God; but when they appeal to Cæsar, under the laws of the Com-

monwealth, the simple question was, '*Has your Assembly*, that is charged with doing these acts, *the power, by the provisions of its Constitution, to do what it has done?*' Well, sir, the judgment of the Supreme Court," he continues, "affirms the fact; but I will not take time to read it. By virtue of that decision," he adds, "this Assembly is the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. By virtue of that decision we hold our property, and have our records." (C. R., 43.) The Court of Appeals of Kentucky, in the Walnut Street Church case, appealed from the Louisville Chancery Court, *held:* "*That when a decision of an ecclesiastical tribunal is set up in civil courts, it is always open to inquiry, whether the tribunal acted within its jurisdiction, and if it did not its decision would not be conclusive.*" (Law Reg., July '72, 450.) It was this decision which the General Assembly resisted by means of a fixed up case in the United States Courts, and thus beautifully exemplifies the doctrine to be subject unto "the powers that be," *provided* those powers be as you wish.

Here, then, are two decisions, one by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and the other by the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, which entirely agree, and, both alike, rest on the principle that the acts of the General Assembly, when they draw into question civil rights, are open to the inquiry, by the civil court, has the Assembly the power by its Constitution to do those acts? And if the civil courts may question the constitutionality of the Assembly when civil rights depend thereon, so, within the Church, may and must the acts of the same Assembly be judged by the Constitution when affecting only ecclesiastical rights and privileges, and have no validity nor binding force accorded to them unless authorized thereby. If the principle emerges in one case, so must it in all.

But does it not seem strange that the General Assembly, which for thirty years stood by and held its property and records and legal existence itself, under *one* of these decisions, that of Pennsylvania, should use that property and fill those records with proceedings to overturn *the other*, that of Kentucky, by procuring the decision of the Supreme Court of the United

States, to which reference has been made? Why this change? "*Tempora mutantur, in illis mutamur.*" The united General Assembly says it "*will not be slow to appreciate the value of this opinion,*" which it has taken such extraordinary steps to sanction with all its moral influence, and to spread broadcast over the world, and to incorporate in the forthcoming Digest as the accepted, final and ruling decision under which it proposes to hold and acquire property.

Could anything make it plainer than this statement, that the United Assembly is the worthy successor and heir of the Assembly whose assumption of power your Synod so long resisted, and which completely revolutionizes our Presbyterial system, overthrows our ecclesiastical liberty, and resolves the Assembly into a spiritual despotism. It is against the principle of this thing that your Synod stands, and has stood. There is a persistent and irresistible logic in human nature, by virtue of which a false principle, once assumed and admitted, tends irresistibly to bring forth its legitimate fruits. The only safety to any people or to any organization, therefore, is in the strict observance of the maxim, *Obsta principiis*—oppose false and destructive principles in their incipiency. The heel of an infant may crush the head of a boa whose encoiling folds will, in the course of years, have acquired sufficient strength to crush the huge frame of an ox. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

It is not unreasonable to hope for a recovery to a better state of things. If in thirty years courts and Assemblies change from the right to the wrong, in a generation more they may possibly change again from the wrong to the right ground. For this prospect let us thank God and take courage. Especially are we encouraged to do so, since the United States Supreme Court heroically acknowledges that this opinion is novel and contrary to the precedents of the English courts; and also because, as shown by Judge Redfield of Boston, in the July *Law Register*, the decision amounts to a mere homily as to how such cases ought to be decided, and has no binding authority or force, even in Kentucky, as a State court, of concurrent jurisdiction, had previously acquired jurisdiction of the case and decided it. Indeed, the decision, thus paraded in the minutes of the As-

sembly, is deprecated as having compromised our highest tribunal before the legal world. The lustre of the triumph of error is sure to be dimmed and its glory to be shot-lived. Yea, verily, we may thank God and take courage. Even the Supreme Court of Missouri, although bewitched by a false theory of the government of the Presbyterian Church, yet was sufficiently true to its legal instincts not to follow that theory to the extreme of the United States Supreme Court. It is morally certain that this decision will and must be abandoned. Whatever may be its effect on other ecclesiastical bodies, it is incompatible with constitutional Presbyterianism. Nay more, it is, with regard to all the churches and the civil courts, unmistakably revolutionary; for it, *pro tanto*, transfers the jurisdiction of civil rights to the ecclesiastical courts, and divests the civil courts of their jurisdiction over all civil and property rights that depend on ecclesiastical decisions. If, as Justice Miller says, "the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final and binding on them in their application *to the case before them*," then, if that case involve property or civil rights dependent on such decisions, there is no occasion left—it would be a mere farce to take it before the civil court, as it is already decided by the ecclesiastical court. In effect, the civil court simply declines to entertain such a case. If it is purely an ecclesiastical case, of course it has no business before the civil courts, and no sane man could suppose this august tribunal to stultify itself with such a solemn utterance of a mere truism. No, the court does not, cannot mean to say, that a man cannot have his purely ecclesiastical grievances redressed by a civil tribunal, but that civil rights, dependent on ecclesiastical decisions, cannot be protected by the civil courts. Never, in the history of the American Church, was such a mistake before made in the interest of irresponsible spiritual despotism, which tends to anarchy by destroying the sense of justice which underlies the peace of society.

The Church, every Church, ought to repudiate such a ruling. She cannot afford to accept it, whether for a temporary advantage or not; and only to think that a Presbyterian Assembly should have procured such a decision, and then have so thoroughly endorsed it! This gives good ground for open and organized resistance—if need be, another Declaration and Testimony from its people. It likewise adds increased importance and significance to the position of your Synod.—There are those of you who can testify that I was hopeful that the union of the two Assemblies, would result in wiser and more

conservative counsels than had prevailed during the war. I had witnessed a great breaking away from the intensely vengeful and intolerant spirit that was so universal, and was, as ever, disposed to give men, and also organizations, the full benefit of their inconsistencies. Neither men nor Church courts are bound to be consistent with themselves. If so every sinner would go to perdition; but men are bound to be consistent with the truth. I was too hopeful, that with the passions of the hour would also dissolve the errors of the hour, especially in Church matters, under the light of God's truth. But the new Assembly, thus far, has, I fear, shown itself fatally consistent with its components during the years immediately preceding the union. My connection with a Presbytery of that Assembly does not imply any individual approbation of the offensive acts. There are many individuals that have not bowed the knee to them. When I was received by the New York Presbytery, it was on motion and with knowledge that I was from a Presbytery of your Synod. An individual is not an ecclesiastical court, occupies no territory, and has no jurisdiction. For a Synod to join in organic relation with the same body, would be to avow accordance of view with it instead of antagonism on the points of controversy which have given existtence to your Synod. This would be to deliberately surrender the truth and then vainly hope to recover it. It would have been gratifying to me, in various ways, had the way been clear for you to unite with this Assembly. But the Detroit Assembly has placed matters beyond the hope of present recovery; and I pledge myself to aid in the contest, already inaugurated, against this false and revolutionary ecclesiology, Whilst on its territory I can aid the present minority.

The Rev. D. X. Junken, D. D, of Pennsylvania, in a communication to the *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, July 13, 1872, criticising the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, to which attention has been called above, uses these words:

"Permit me, then, Messrs. Editors, once for all, to record my respectful but earnest protest against the doctrine that any opinion or decision of a transient majority of our highest judicatory, apart from the Constitution, is *law*. That venerable court is neither *infallible* nor 'supreme,' to the extent of overriding the Constitution of the Church. In it the powers and duties of the General Assembly are *prescribed* and *limited;* and they can not, without the sin of *covenant-breaking*, violate that instrument. It is the charter of our ecclesiastical liberties and rights; and the doctrine that its creature,

the General Assembly, may at will *ignore* its principles, *violate* its guarantees, and *transcend* its limits, is either a doctrine of despotism or of anarchy.

"The very objects of a written Constitution are to guarantee the rights of individuals, the franchises of smaller communities, and the rights of minorities. In a written Constitution the people agree upon the principles by which they consent to be governed. If a majority may, regardless of the Constitution, decide and make law, then constitutions are of no use; they are a mockery and a snare, and the doctrine that is so fast gaining ground, both in civil and ecclesitasical organizations, that a majority is absolute, irrespective of fundamental law, is the most dangerous enemy to regulated liberty. The despotism of majorities, unrestrained by any social pact, is the worst despotism on earth; and I am profoundly convinced that, unless the growing disregard of the restraints of constitutional law can be arrested, anarchy or despotism will invade our civil liberties, and factious majorities will trample under foot our religious freedom."

The point now made is, that here is an issue made up on no doubtful principle; and that, consequently, unless one party or the other changes its ground, it is not possible that the Synod of Missouri and the Northern Assembly should unite "on conditions mutually acceptable."

Through the appointment of this committee to visit your Synod, and which put in an appearance, you were brought face to face with this Assembly for the first time, and this principle of *the supremacy of the constitution of our Church* at once emerges to view. You were cast forth six years ago from your Assembly as unfit for a place in it, because of your testimony to this one of the ideas of the Gospel. You must go wherever you go with it still on your lips, and ask those who desire official relations with you, do we agree on this fundamental doctrine as to the nature of the Presbyterian Church? This obstacle to organic union with the Northern Assembly is not of your creating or occasioning, nor is it private but public. I am sure, however, that it will not stand in the way of Christian *courtesies* and salutations between the two bodies, as I understand your attitude to be fraternal, charitable and cordial towards all Christian peoples and churches. I doubt not the Synod will feel obliged for the "sympathy" expressed and for the interest shown, and deeply regret the existence of any obstacle in the way of an organic fellowship.

But your Synod has stood true to the standards of the Presbyterian Church, loyal to her sovereign Head, and opposed to all defec-

tion from him, preferring the affliction and contumely of being treated as an outcast rather than accept the rewards of a sinful apostacy from the historic position and practice of the true followers of Jesus. I slightly accommodate the language of another, and say: "Your members and ministers have done and suffered too much as the representatives of an unsecular, non-political church, to sacrifice it now upon the beguilement of a newly awakened sentimentalism in your neighbors. They must preserve the Church unspotted from the world. They have suffered contumely, poverty, and evil. They have been despoiled of churches and parsonages and schools. Some have suffered martyrdom. They have resisted unto blood, standing against the political defilement of the Church. *The great principle*—the exclusiveness of the spiritual vocation of the Church—*you have preserved intact.* Your struggles are historical, and the history is a sign of good things to come. It is a testimony—a testimony that the world cannot afford to lose. It witnesses against adulterous defections of the Church from Christ. You cannot now extinguish the lamp of your own history by hiding it under the bushel of any Church stained with political corruptions. It would be pitiable recreancy to indulge the thought." (S. R. 52.)

Is it not, however, reasonable to hope that some active and definitive steps may yet be taken by that powerful body to remove, on their part, at whatever cost of pride of opinion or of self-consistency, valuing most of all the consistency of the truth, every obstacle to a cordial fellowship of all the Presbyterian families? Unions on harmonious and sound principles, and such alone are matters of rejoicing and sources of true spiritual strength and blessedness; and may God hasten all such in his own good time and way.

I have intentionally dwelt somewhat on the principle of the constitutional subordination of the courts of the Church as presenting an insuperable obstacle, as I deeply deplore, in the way of your Synodical union with the Northern Assembly. There are other points which might have been urged with perhaps greater effect. But it was not on account of any doctrinal departure, so called, nor of any political deliverance directly, but immediately and solely on account of an unwarrantable assumption of irresponsible and unconstitutional control over your Synod by the Assembly of 1866, that forced it into an attitude of opposition which has resulted, in God's providence, in your independent position. The view above taken has thus been germain to your peculiar case — has been suggested

by the specific nature of the particular action of the Assembly, which was meant to dissolve your body, that action being not an interpretation of the standards of the Church or of the Bible, nor an adjudged application to the Synod of any known law of the Church, but a mere *naked resolution*, in the nature of a *decree*, as though the Assembly had the right, upon any grounds, to enact laws — to legislate for the Church, and to compel obedience from the courts of the Church on pain of dissolution; whereas, the Assembly has no inherent power or authority, its powers being wholly derivative, spiritual and declarative, so that "no Church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority and all their decisions should be founded on the revealed will of God," as set forth in the standards of the Church.

But it is also understood that the Northern General Assembly accepts the positions taken by the separate Assemblies on politics, "loyalty and freedom" prior to their union. Indeed, the two bodies came to be of one mind on these subjects, and that was accounted a circumstance most favorable to their union. Had they not been like-minded and resolved in these respects, no union would have been practicable on the basis of "the standards pure and simple," or on any other basis. The Assembly (O. S.) of 1866 adopted and published to the world this statement of its position:

"It thus appears that six General Assemblies in succession, including the present, have with remarkable unanimity, maintained the same position concerning the rebellion and concerning those engaged in it. After carefully reviewing the whole course of these years of strife and alienation, we find nothing to recall or modify in the deliverances which have been made. We have taken our position upon the clearest principles of the word of God, as set forth in our standards. We still extend to them (in the South) the hand of kindness, and desire that our former ecclesiastical fellowship may be restored, whenever it can be done upon those principles which six General Assemblies have announced. *To form a union with any organization upon any other basis, would only serve to bring together those who could not act in harmony, and to perpetuate strife and alienation.*" (D. P. 118.)

This position was consistently maintained up to the final dissolution of that Assembly; it never disclaimed those acts; but on the contrary, at its last regular meeting, when overtured to do so, it, in terms, refused to express any disapproval of its previous deliverances, and, therefore, it adhered to those utterances, quietly letting their

compatibility with the constitution of the Church take care of itself. (Min. 1869, pp. 924–5.)

If possible, our New School brethren overtopped all this:

"This General Assembly (N. S.) exhorts all the churches and ministers connected with this branch of the Presbyterian Church, and all our countrymen, to stand by their country . . patient amid delays, undaunted by reverses, persistent and untiring in effort, until, by the blessing of God, the glorious motto, 'One Country, *One Constitution*, and ONE DESTINY,' shall be enthroned as the sublime fact of the present and the more sublime harbinger of the future." (Min. 1863.)

Again:

"That the Government of these United States, as provided for by the Constitution, ... forever excluded the modern doctrine of secession as a civil or political right."

Again:

"This Assembly (1866) adheres to the resolution passed by our Assembly of 1863 (Minutes, p. 42): "That the colored man should in this country enjoy the right of suffrage, in connection with all other men, is but a simple dictate of justice. The Assembly cannot perceive any good reason why he should be deprived of this right on the ground of his color or his race." Even if suffrage may not be universal, let it at least be impartial.

"In case such impartial suffrage is conceded, that we may still reap the legitimate fruits of our National victory over secession and slavery, and that treason and rebellion may not inure to the direct political advantage of the guilty, we judge it to be a simple act of justice, that the constitutional basis of representation in Congress should be so far altered as to meet the exigencies growing out of the abolition of slavery; and we likewise hold it to be the solemn duty of our National Executive and Congress to adopt only such methods of reconstruction as shall effectually protect all loyal persons in the States lately in revolt.

"As loyalty is the highest civil virtue, and treason the highest civil crime, so it is necessary for the due vindication and satisfaction of National justice, that the chief fomenters and representatives of the rebellion should, by due course and process of law, be visited with condign punishment."

Again:

"In Andrew Johnson, so unexpectedly called to the chair of our martyred Chief, the Assembly recognize a man distinguished for a long course of earnest effort to elevate the masses, and for a steady, consistent patriotism that neither the power nor the favor of a treasonable oligarchy has been able successfully to assail or seduce. We desire to pledge to him, as our constitutional Chief Magistrate, our

confidence and support in his efforts to vindicate the majesty of law; maintain the National Government in its just supremacy; destroy the spirit and counteract the workings of the evil system that created this war; inspire a just appreciation of the crime of treason and a true loyalty to the Government in the breasts of the masses of the white population of the South; and extend to the colored citizens of that section the practical enjoyment of those personal and political rights announced in the Declaration of Independence, but denied to them by a despotic aristocracy." (Minutes, 1865.)

Again:

"Let it not be said that, as a Church, we have nothing to do with civil legislation. The day has gone by when an intelligent Christian will affirm the doctrine that what is wrong in religion is right in politics. God has taught us, in this war, that the Church must conserve the State by instructing the people in the great principles of justice and inspiring them to practice the same."

And again:

"Our record as a Church we commit to the calm judgment of posterity, in the full assurance that there is neither a line nor a word the Christian patriotism of the future will desire to erase; not a single sentiment befitting our relation to this great conflict it will find unexpressed." (Minutes, 1865.)

All these utterances were fresh in the minds of both bodies in 1869 when the basis of Union was adopted by both assemblies in which the general accordance of views and principles as the underlying foundation of the transaction was expressed in the preamble in these words: "Believing that the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom would be promoted by the healing of our divisions, and that the two bodies bearing the same name, having the same Constitution and each recognizing the other as *a sound and orthodox body according to the principles of the confession common to both*, cannot be justified by any but the most imperative reasons in maintaining separate and in some respects rival organizations." No such "reasons" existed and Union was consummated on the basis of the "common standards"—*i. e.*, both bodies accepted those standards in the same sense, which sense, so far as the points and principles now in mind are concerned, can best be gathered from the actual deliverances and course of action during several immediately preceding years as indicated. Some samples of those deliverances have been submitted, showing that with reference to the constitutional powers of the Church courts and rules of procedure touching internal and purely ecclesiastical matters as well as political and secular affairs, such latitudinarian and

unscriptural views prevailed as to transform the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church under the magic of their prevailing influence into another kind of government and church order than that of the former days of strict construction. In the history of our country the political world has divided on the construction to be placed on the fundamental law of the State, and so it seems the day has for the second time come when Presbyterians must divide on the latitudinarian or the strict construction of the standards of the Church. The great reason, as I conceive, why the Synod of Missouri and other strict constructionists feel such deep concern about the distinct and conscious recognition and practical observance of the strict construction of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in regard to politics, loyalty, rebellion, slavery, freedom, suffrage, and the like "civil affairs," is, that the prevalence of the opposite latitudinarian views and corresponding course of action imperils the saving doctrines of the gospel. The Constitution is a unit, and all the parts must be viewed in their interdependence and organic and vital relations to "The Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "The way of the world is to *make* laws, but to *follow* customs. If men hesitate to destroy a constitution, they can fritter it away by explanation and construction. When a majority becomes very strong, the constitution may be amended with great facility; so that by amending it, or construing it away, or by trampling it under foot, the majority will get rid of all restraints of a written constitution, when it stands in the way of their will." "A majority shall govern," says our Book, but *no*, NEVER! in this worldly, politic, deceitful, devilish spirit of all unrighteousness.

It may be safely and can only be sadly affirmed, that the case thus made out, that the present Northern Assembly adheres to all the principles involved in the aforesaid bellum and post bellum deliverances, finds no relief in "The Concurrent Declaration" to which such considerable prominence has been given. That declaration is in the basis of union, and in the following words: "The official records of the two branches of the Church for the period of separation should be preserved and held as making up the one history of the Church; and no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both the bodies, should be any authority until re-estab-

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lished in the united body, except in so far as such rule or procedure may affect the rights of property founded thereon." (Min. 1869, p. 915.) This declaration is penned with great care, and had an important purpose to serve; but did the Assemblies, by concurring in it, mean thereby to renounce and repeal, in advance of their union, their political and secular utterances in the previous years? Manifestly it had no such purpose, but was meant as a prudent provision against any confusion that might arise out of the conflicting actions of the two bodies during their separate and not altogether friendly and consistent course of over thirty years. Had it been meant to repeal or to recall the acts objected to by you, it would not have been concurred in, but would have raised a storm. This interpretation of the "concurrent declaration" lies revealed on the face of its enactment. The kindly disposition of some good men to accommodate this declaration to the "furtherance" of organic union "upon terms of mutual confidence, respect, Christian honor, and love" (1870), and "on conditions mutually acceptable" (1872), has led the United Assembly into an attitude of questionable propriety, after due allowance for all that can be consistently embraced under the categories of "rules" and "precedents."

What answer can be given to the following impeachment? especially when one considers the Walnut Street Church case, and, as some think, the not insignificant circumstance that the last Assembly appointed a committee of arrangements for taking part in the grand national and centennial jubilee of 1876—all glorious for citizens; but is this the business of the Church?

"Through several consecutive years, both branches of the now united Assemblies persisted in the utterance of political dogmas, which, whether true or false, they were inhibited by the word of God, and by their own statute law, from pronouncing in their ecclesiastical chambers. These unlawful utterances remain uncancelled upon the records of both the courts now amalgamated into one. No disavowal of them has been made, as of words inconsiderately uttered in times of high excitement. No counter declaration has been filed, gathering up the sacred truth of God in a new proclamation of the spirituality and independence of that kingdom which is not of this world." (D. P., p. 100.)

Whether viewed from a Southern or Northern standpoint, there may be something more than a warning—there may be an instructive study in the following picture, taken, as I suppose, from the easel of a Methodist Bishop who knows whereof he affirms:

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"*Organized communities are governed by their own habit.*

"This never fails to override the most formal written enactments when they come into violent conflict with it. Many recent statutes are dead letters, because such is the state of *public opinion*, or, rather, such is the public habit, that they cannot be enforced.

"If you would form any safe opinion as to the future course of any organized community, look not at written compacts and constitutional guarantees, called into existence by some occasion, but read its history. Find the direction of its current. Study its life. Ascertain its habits *e. g.*

"No fact of American history is more patent than that it is the habit of the Methodist Episcopal Church to invade the domain of the State—to run into politics. It feels itself charged with the management of State affairs in important cases.

"To make the matter worse, she has a political history that she is proud of. The people, and especially the preachers of this Church, feel that, as a Church, they have done more to bring about the present condition of things in the country than any other class of people.

"They review their career as political agitators with the utmost complacency. It has been successful. It has been brilliant, not only in politics, but in war; they have run a triumphant course. It is a heroic history. They look upon themselves as having 'saved the country.' They carry with them the consciousness of the conqueror and the benefactor—all the result of the part they took in the politics of the country.

"So far as the past and the present can possibly give assurance of the future, it is certain that on all occasions that offer an issue, in which the Methodist conscience may deem itself concerned, the ecclesiastics of the Northern Church will be ready to go headlong into the canvass. She will be ever and anon upon the hustings. Her pulpit will again resound with the declaration of the demagogue, and her pews will send back the loud huzza.

"This is the more certain, because she has tasted the delicious rewards of the partizan. One of her chief ministers, soon after the war closed, in an address which was published, boasted that his Church had given more moral support and more men to the war than any other, and affirmed that a grateful government had recognized the service by giving many profitable contracts to members of it. Only let the occasion come, then, and this history will be repeated.

"Happy will the people be if the same Church shall not precipitate another war. It seems likely that all the varied scenes of history are to be enacted over again in our country.

"We have had a war of independence—the war of 1776. We have had a commercial war—the war of 1812. We have had insurrections—the whisky rebellion, and the Harper's Ferry raid. We have had, also, a great civil war. War is the staple of history, and, in all probability, we are not done with it, but have only had a foretaste. Is there not brewing already an agrarian war? Does not the firmament, also, portend a religious war?

"The public mind has been familiarized with it. The Methodist Church, North, has pioneered the way for the Romanist, and when his opportunity arrives he will not be slow to follow. Then there will be manœuvering and counter-manœuvering, and provocation will respond to provocation. We vainly thought the civil war impossible. If we imagine a war of religion impossible in this country, we have studied history and human nature to little purpose. And when the fray comes the Northern Methodist will be the eager hotspur first in the saddle. The history of his Church, and the consciousness resulting from it, will insure this.

"The non-political character of the Church, South, as distinguished from the Church, North, is, as we conceive, the most vital point of difference between the two bodies. It is a difference so fundamental, affecting the constitution of the Church so deeply that there can be no question of the Southern Church. All the deadliest apostacies of the Christian community have originated from ambitious connections with the State. From Constantine down, undue alliances between the ecclesiastic and the magistrate have originated and been the cause of all those monstrous corruptions which at times have threatened to make religion a hissing and a by-word in the earth forever. The Southern Church separated from the Northern (1844) that she might keep out of politics." (M. E. Chs. 58–62, 63.)

May I not give as a final touch to this picture and its companion from the easel of the Bishop, the everliving petition of Burns—

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder frae us
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us
An' ev'en Devotion."

We turn now to consider the application of our criterion to the proposed union with the Southern Assembly.

It does not necessarily follow because there are good and sufficient reasons for not uniting with the Northern Assembly, that therefore your Synod should unite with the Southern Assembly. There may be abundant reason for the Synod standing independent of either Assembly, or for uniting, if at all, with some other branch of the Reformed Church. According to the criterion above given, and accepted as applicable to a valid solution of the practical problem before you, you are bound not to form any organic connection that sacrifices or manifestly imperils the fundamental principle of the supremacy of the law of the Church strictly construed, or any important application of it.

We have, at a glance, seen how matters stand as to the Northern Assembly. How do they stand with the Southern Assembly? To ascertain this, let the inquiry be conducted impartially and without prejudice And in order to this, let me say, at the very outset, that the imputation of *sectionalism* is out of the question. This sectionalism is a two-edged weapon, and cuts both ways. Those who wish the Synod to go into a Northern connection are just as obnoxious to this imputation of sectionalism as are their brethren who seek for it a different relation. We go farther, and reprobate this *spirit* of sectionalism as "strange fire" on God's altar. "The passions of the war are already greatly mitigated. They will soon die away entirely. But however politicians, or even political ecclesiastics, may fan the smouldering embers of embittered feeling to serve paltry, personal, or party ends, Christian men will 'seek peace and ensue it.' They will do whatever may be consistent with truth and compatible with vital interests to promote the return of the era of good feeling in the country. For this they will sacrifice anything, except their fealty to truth and righteousness. By every impulse of the regenerate heart, and every consideration of duty, good men will promote the triumph of love. If the Church, South, or North, has no reason for continued separate existence other than the passions of the war, let her be blotted out. If, indeed, her organization from the first was merely in the interest of or in opposition to slave property, as her enemies assert, then she never had any just title to existence, and the sooner she perishes the better." (M. E. Chs. 16—). This language was originally used with reference to the Methodist churches, North and South, and the sectional reproach

cast on the good name of the Southern Methodist Church is wiped away, and it is manfully shown that the two grounds of the separation were, 1—*The supremacy of the law of the Church*, the question of slavery being merely the *occasion* on which that supremacy of the law was tested; and, 2—"The Southern Methodist Church separated from the Northern *that she might keep out of politics.* Each has followed the logic of 1844"—the date of the separation.

In regard to the Southern General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, it not only in common with the Northern Assembly accepts the Westminster standards entire, but, unlike that Assembly, it accepts them on the theory of *strict construction.* It is a singular and most interesting fact, and under the circumstances, a distinguishing glory of your Synod, that it is the only remaining portion of the General Assembly (O. S.) as it existed after the organization of the Southern Assembly at Augusta, Georgia, in December, 1861, that now remains, and that, too, holding to the standards in their *ante-bellum sense*—in their ante-Spring Resolutions sense. It is just as notorious a fact that the Southern Assembly was organized on the old standards in this old school, ante-bellum, strict construction sense. This is positively asserted in the famous *Address* issued by that body immediately after organizing, in which it is said:

"The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States—that is to say, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory for Worship—were unanimously and solemnly declared to be the Constitution of the Church in the Confederate States, with NO OTHER CHANGE than the substitution of Confederate for United wherever the country is mentioned in the standards. The Church, therefore, in these seceded States, presents now the spectacle of a separate, and independent and complete organization, under the style and title of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. In thus taking its place among sister Churches of this and other countries, it seems proper that it should set forth the causes which have impelled it to separate from the Church of the North." (D. P. 6, 65.)

This solemn declaration of "NO OTHER CHANGE" than that of name must, of course, go for nothing, if it is not made good by action. And yet there is some virtue in merely *starting right, so far as this acceptance of the standards in the old and strict sense* is concerned. There is something conservative and presumptively favorable even in that. But it is true, and a matter of record and of history, that reflects great honor upon the name of the Assem-

bly, South, that it has up to this time continued to maintain that original position with remarkable fidelity and consistency.

1. The Southern Assembly adhered to the position of the undivided Old School Assembly before the war *on the subject of slavery*. I quote again from the Address:

"In the first place, we would have it distinctly understood, that, in our ecclesiastical capacity, we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery, that is to say, we have no commission either to propagate or abolish it. The policy of its existence or non-existence is a question which exclusively belongs to the State. We have no right, as a Church, to enjoin it as a duty, or to condemn it as sin. Our business is with the duties that spring from the relation; the duties of the masters on the one hand, and of their slaves on the other. These duties we are to proclaim and to enforce with spiritual sanctions. The social, civil, political problems connected with this great subject transcend our sphere, as God has not entrusted to His Church the organization of society, the construction of governments, nor the allotment of individuals to their various stations. The Church has as much right to preach to the monarchies of Europe and the despotisms of Asia, the doctrines of republican equality, as to preach to the governments of the South, the extirpation of slavery. This position is impregnable, unless it can be shown that slavery is a sin." (D. P. 14.)

Beyond controversy, the accepted position of the undivided Old School Assembly before the war was expressed in the historic deliverance of 1845, penned by the Rev. Dr. Rice, now President of your Synodical College. Here are its lucid words:

"The Church of Christ is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends to the religious faith and moral conduct of her members. She cannot legislate where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which He has not made. The question, therefore, which the Assembly is called to decide, is this: Do the Scriptures teach that the holding of slaves, without regard to circumstances, is a sin, the renunciation of which should be made a condition of membership in the Church of Christ?

"It is impossible to answer this question in the affirmative, without contradicting some of the plainest declarations of the Word of God." (Digest.)

The Southern Assembly, observe, continued to occupy that ante-bellum ground, and maintained it throughout the war; and when the war was closed it promptly made the following utterance in a pastoral letter "*read and unanimously adopted*," 1865, to-wit:

"This relation is now overthrown, suddenly and violently; whether

justly or unjustly, in wrath or in mercy, for weal or for woe, let history and the Judge of all the earth decide.

"Whatever, therefore, we may have to lament before God, either for neglect of duty or for actual wrong toward our servants, while the relation lasted, we are not called, now that it has been abolished, to bow the head in humiliation before men, or admit that the memory of many of our dear kindred is to be covered with shame because, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they had bond-servants born in their house, or bought with their money; and who now, redeemed by the same precious blood, sit down together in the kingdom of God.

"The other consideration connected with this subject is *the present condition of this people*

"You are bound to them not only by the ties of a common nature, a common sin, but a common redemption also. They have grown up around and in your households, have toiled for your benefit, ministered to your comforts and wants, and have often tenderly, faithfully nursed you in sickness. They are still around your doors, in the bosom of your community. Many of them are your fellow-heirs of salvation. Together with you, they all need it; greatly need it for time—for eternity. We are persuaded you will not turn away from them in this day of imagined millennium—we fear of terrible calamity. Do all you can for their best welfare, and do it quickly, for they already begin to pass rapidly away. "By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and by dishonor, by evil report and good report," let it be shown to all men that nothing shall withdraw the sympathy of your heart or the labor of your hand from a work which must of necessity and ever rest chiefly upon those who dwell in the land, not upon the strangers who visit it. If their condition is made better, if souls are plucked as brands from the burning, you will have the comfort of knowing that you were, under God, instrumental in such happy results. Should our worst fears be realized, and their doom be sealed, you will have a pure conscience at the bar of the final Judge." [Minutes, 1865.]

Here we have a unanimous action at the first organization of that Assembly in 1861, and also a unanimous action after the close of the war agreeing with each other and both entirely agreeing with the position of the undivided Assembly (O. S.) before the war.

The imperative claims of truth and justice demand that, *as a matter of fact*, the position of the Southern Assembly on this subject shall be accepted as set forth in these extracts. This is a fair exhibit and any attempt to discredit it must be by garbled terms and phrases or loose assertions. An honest minded man is always willing to accept the truth, whether it makes for him or against him. Whether right or wrong, the Southern Assembly has never been abolitionized,

but has stood on the scriptural basis of the standards and regarded abolitionism, as did the Old School Assembly in its accepted position before the war, as in contravention of the teachings of God's word and the practice of the Apostles, and therefore infidel and pernicious in its moral bearings. 1 Tim.vi. 1–5.

"True, Mr. Moderator, this was done a great many years ago, but let me respectfully remind you, that sin does not loose its foul odor by years, neither is the savor of righteousness impaired by the lapse of time." Principles do not change.

2. There was, moreover, "no other change" than one of name on questions involving the relations of Church and State. It may be affirmed with emphasis that the fidelity with which the Assembly South adhered to the letter as well as the spirit of the accepted standards in this respect is in glaring contrast with what we have seen was the course pursued by the Assemblies North. As they assumed to pronounce and denounce slavery a sin, so, in like manner, did they undertake to dispose of the secular and political questions of secession and rebellion, to condemn them in the given case, *as sinful*, without any authority whatever from God's word and the standards to do so in any case. According to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, these questions do not fall within her spiritual jurisdiction. In the language of the admirable statement of 1845, "The Church of Christ is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends to the *religious* faith and *moral* conduct of her members. She cannot legislate where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which He has not made." And this only accords with the Book itself in various parts, and especially with the admirable statement of our Confession of Faith. Ch. xxxi. 4.

"Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the Commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary, or by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."

It is, then, of "religious" and not of *political* faith, of "moral" and not of *civil* conduct of which the Church has spiritual jurisdiction.

The special cases of "*petition*" and "*advice required*" never have arisen with us, but should they arise, they would make no trouble, but have to be disposed of consistently with the general principle laid down. The *fundamental error* on this subject into which, on

departing from this principle, the Assemblies fell whose theory the Union Assembly has inherited, was, that of assuming that it is the right and the duty of the Assembly to adjudge the moral character of such "civil affairs" as State rights, State sovereignty, State allegiance, loyalty, secession, rebellion and the like, and to dogmatically pronounce them sinful in any given case; whereas all such questions, just as did slavery, lie within the sphere and belong to the category of things in themselves indifferent, to be judged by the individual conscience. Christ has not legislated on such things, or rather He has so legislated as to leave them to the individual conscience.

Forms of government are things manifestly indifferent. The people of God have lived and may conscientiously live under all forms of government, and *the right of revolution* has been asserted and practiced by the followers of Christ in every age; and to obey or to rebel against human government is not necessarily, but may be, either a virtue or a sin in the sight of God. This is wholly determined by circumstances, of which, not priests nor Church courts, but the individual conscience must judge as accountable before Him. In the world's code the lustre or the turpitude of the act of rebellion depends on the provocation coupled with the *failure* or *success* of the undertaking. Washington became the paragon of all political virtue because he had a just cause and succeeded; but had he failed, however just his cause, his name, in the view of his enemies, would have borne down in history the odium and odor of disloyalty, rebellion and treason, notwithstanding the justice of his cause. Christian ethics scorn such a capricious standard, whether set up out of or in the Church. The duties which God imposes on man's conscience respecting the powers that be do not stand in necessary relation to any particular form of government, or the success or failure of any particular political or civil act or venture. As to that the Church is indifferent, her commission and constitution being compatable alike with all forms of government, whether democratic, representative, oligarchical or monarchical; whether constitutional or personal; whether mixed or pure; and so she has no *right* to sit in judgment on or "intermeddle with the civil affairs" of the citizen, as to his opinions, or conduct, or property, which concern his commonwealth and not the Church, whose business is wholly with men as the subjects of Christ, whose "kingdom is not of this world." There is no such thing as political duties rising into the sphere of Christian ethics, so as to warrant the Church to enforce particular political

conduct and opinions by the sanctions of religion and by the authority of Christ.

How often has it been urged with unresisted force, and accepted and acted on as an axiom or unquestionable principle, that civil affairs or political questions have a moral side, and hence Church courts, as the guardians of morals, public and private, are not only at liberty, but in duty bound, to interpret such questions and affairs in their moral character and bearings, and thus afford the public needed guidance in matters of moral import.

This specious and delusive plea has misled some of the best of men. So far from its being true, it is the *principium* of "a vast brood of fatal heresies," as a moderate measure of discrimination will render perfectly palpable. It is only a phase of that weakness in human nature that disposes it to shift to organizations matters of personal and individual responsibility.

When it is said that political questions rise into the sphere of morals, I ask attention immediately to the farther inquiry, *which sphere?* There are three spheres of morals, which must not be confounded: 1. The sphere of things necessarily right, as love to God and the persons of men; 2. The sphere of things necessarily wrong, as hatred of God or man; and 3. The sphere of things indifferent, and which belong to neither of the foregoing categories, as styles of dress, forms of governments, meats, drinks and the like. This distinction is as old as Aristotle, and will be found set forth articulately in his scientific treatise on ethics, so that it would be reasonable to expect a heathen of intelligence to know and recognize it. Now, it is over this third sphere of things, in their nature indifferent, that private judgment and the individual conscience preside, and it is to this third sphere that the relation of master and servant, and such other "civil affairs" as forms of government, secession, loyalty, rebellion and the like belong. And when any power in the Church or the State proposes to take such questions out of the grasp of the individual conscience where nature and reason place them, let an authority be shown to which conscience is bound to submit.

Conscience is superior to human law. It is not bound by statute. Its behests are imperative. It testifies against and seeks the overthrow of any law that oppresses it, by refusing obedience to the precept and submitting to the penalty of the law. This it does till the law can be changed, either peacefully or by revolution. Whilst man's moral nature is in a normal state and asserts its sway, no rule

but one of righteousness can receive the endorsement of conscience and be assured of its future.

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."—Acts iv. 19.

Those who recall the giant discussion in Congress (1850–51) respecting the *higher law*, in which such men, such political gods, as Webster and Clay participated, can not forget that a lack of discrimination in this very particular was its weak and vulnerable point. The ablest vindication of the simple truth that appeared in that trying time was from the pen of Dr. Charles Hodge in the *Princeton Review*. Bating some noted exceptions, it is a little remarkable that the very class of men who then were impassioned, almost blatant, in their advocacy of the supremacy of the individual conscience over all human authority, should have since sunk down into the abject degradation of advocating passive obedience.

It is essential to civil as well as religious liberty that no human authority, whether under the forms of Church or State, be allowed to lord it over conscience, or to wrest from the grasp of its jurisdiction what rightfully belongs to it. God alone has the right to restrain or control it. If the Church courts had any rightful authority to pronounce such things as slavery, secession, rebellion, *sins*, they had a right to do all else. They were bound, however, to *show* that authority from the Constitution of the Church and the word of God, and then they would have been justified, and not otherwise, in making, as they did, *such sins*, unrepented of and unrenounced, terms barring from admission into Presbytery and from communion in the Church. But this they could not do.

Both Assemblies fell into the vicious mistake of assuming to themselves and asserting, without proof, a jurisdiction with which the authority of Christ never invested them.

For ecclesiastical courts to usurp jurisdiction over questions which belong, and are left by God, to the sphere of private judgment and of the individual conscience, is the very essence of spiritual oppression and despotism, even as it is the essence of civil and political despotism, oppression and tyranny for the civil court or magistrate to invade or enter beyond the limit set by law, the holy precincts of private and individual rights and liberties, such as freedom of speech and of opinion and liberty in the choice of religion and the like. In each case we say to the Church and to the State: thus far shalt

thou go and no farther. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

Let the lawful authority be shown, or the assumption of such jurisdiction and the attempt to exercise such powers must anticipate a sturdy resistance from every man who knows his rights and knowing, dares defend them. To act otherwise were to be willing slaves, in passive submission to the overthrow of truth and righteousness in our very streets.

I frankly confess that as I gaze and reflect upon the position of your little band, its moral sublimity fills me with admiration and thanksgivings, and I feel borne aloft by the conviction that for all your affliction and trials, in the midst of which the hearts of some may have sickened and the knees of others weakened, God has in store for you some glorious reward. Founded on the Rock of Ages, standing upon the old foundation unmoved amidst the surging billows that have broken over you and carried others from their moorings, the eyes of the Christian world are turned toward you with admiration and rejoicing.

Hymn 564.—"On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayest smile at all thy foes."

Hymn 420.—"Shout ye little flock and blest,
Soon you'll enter into rest;
There your seat is now prepared,
There your kingdom and reward.

"Fear not, brethren, joyful stand
On the border of your land,
Jesus Christ, our Father's Son,
Bids us undismayed go on.

"Lord, submissive make us go,
Gladly leaving all below;
Only thou our Savior be,
And we still will follow thee."

In that classic incident of the Savior's life bearing on this subject, we find, as it were, the text on which these views are little more than a comment. Two parties, the Herodians and the Pharisees, diametrically and violently opposed to each other, conspired to entrap the Savior with a wary question. By a flattering address they attempt

to fill him with indifference to human authority and conceit as an independent and fearless teacher, and then ask, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?" The Herodians were the loyal party, and had Christ answered that it was *not* lawful to pay tribute, they stood ready at once to arrest and accuse him as a traitor. The Pharisees were, with respect to the Roman Government, the disloyal party, and violently opposed to the tribute, and had Christ answered that it was *lawful* to pay the tribute, he would have been caught in their snare and doomed as the victim of their conspiracy and wrath. But how, as a matter of fact, did the case end? "And they could not take hold of his words before the people, and they marvelled at his answer and held their peace."—Matt. 22. It is, therefore, perfectly manifest that he did not answer their question, either *yes* or *no*, either affirmatively or negatively, he did not undertake to pronounce for or against either the loyal or the disloyal party. What then did he do? for what he did filled both parties with amazement, and utterly disarmed them in his presence, when he answered, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's." He simply referred the "civil matter" in question to each man's own conscience. Upon that principle He had acted himself and He left others free to do the same.

The following pertinent incident, interesting as a piece of practical casuistry under this view of things, is furnished from the experience of a pastor of Brooklyn, Rev. Dr. Van Dyke, and is equal to any of Dr. Spencer's sketches. He gave it in the Assembly of 1866, thus:

"And here let me solicit your attention to the real question at issue. It was not in dispute whether Christians are bound to obey 'the powers that be.' On that point there was and is no dispute; and you will permit me to say respectfully, that it is not ingenuous for members of this Assembly to persist in charging upon the minority of this House, or upon the ministers and members of our Southern churches, the folly and the wickedness of denying the Scriptural doctrine on this subject.

"We all admit that Christians are bound, by their allegiance to Christ, to obey civil magistrates and to reverence lawful authority. But the question in dispute was, 'what, under the Constitution of the United States, are the powers that be?' And, just here, I beg leave to relate a little of my own personal experience. Every Sabbath since I was ordained I have persisted in the habit, which I learned from the word of God and the example of my old pastor, and have prayed publicly for the President of the United States and

'all in authority' I have done this under successive Presidents, and in the face of reproach from members of both political parties.

"Soon after the commencement of the war, a friend complained to me that he did not like the way that I prayed. 'Very well,' said I; 'teach me how to pray.' 'Whom do you mean,' said he, 'by all in authority? Do you include Jeff. Davis?' I answered' 'Is Jeff. Davis in authority?' He replied in the affirmative. 'Very well, then, he is included.' 'No,' he passionately exclaimed, 'he is *not* in authority.' 'Very well, then,' said I, 'he is *not* included.' 'But,' resumed my friend, 'it is a disputed question whether he is in power or no.' 'Very well, again,' said I, 'the omniscient God is able to settle that disputed question, and let him answer my prayers, which are offered in direct compliance with his word, according to his own infallible knowledge of the facts. I do not come to the mercy seat to argue questions of constitutional law.'

"This, sir, in my judgment, is the true position for a Christian minister to occupy; and I would to God that our General Assembly had stood firm in this position during all these years of strife and confusion."

And to this I will only add the general reflections of another, of no less a name than the Rev. Robert J. Breckenridge, D.D., LL.D., who so surprisingly forgot the principle he here so tersely enunciates:

"Nothing in the history of society is more remarkable than the strength of that tendency to confound and identify its civil and religious institutions, which has manifested itself in all ages.

"In that spiritual Kingdom manifested in the visible Church, and whose true seat is within us, neither time, nor place, nor condition, nor race has any vital significance; nor can flesh and blood inherit it; nor does anything avail but the new creature. Its union with the civil power is the highest aggravation of confounding it with the world—for the State is the highest form in which the world appears. So that neither the Visible Church, nor the Civil Power, can have any duty, either toward God or itself, or each other, more clear and transcendent, than that each should confine itself with respect to the other to its own obvious sphere—each regarding the other as the ordinance of the common Father and God of both. * * *

"And all corrupt churches which have sought the closest union with the civil power, have done so, not in order to submit themselves to the dominion of the State, but rather to subject it to tyranny as relentless as that which they made it the instrument of inflicting. To plead for the freedom of the Church is, therefore, to plead, at the same time, for the independence of States, and for the security of mankind against the cruelties of all false religion. * * * It is precisely in this absolute and exclusive headship of Christ, and the consecration of his Church to Him responsive thereto, that the root of her inward freedom lies; just as it is on her entire separ-

ation from the world, that her outward freedom is grounded, and can be manifest."—*Knowledge of God Subjectively Considered, chap. xxii., and quoted in "D. and T."*

It was understood the world over, and by none better than those who at home and abroad opposed her conservatism, that the undivided General Assembly (O. S.) before the war, held, as bound to it of God, the position set forth above Now let the records of the Southern Assembly from the time of its separate organization onward speak for it. Was its position accordant therewith or not? At its first meeting it said:

"We have separated from our brethren of the North as Abraham separated from Lot—because we are persuaded that the interests of true religion will be more effectually subserved by two independent churches, under the circumstances, than by one united body.

"The course of the last Assembly, at Philadelphia, conclusively shows that if we should remain together, the political questions which divide us as citizens, will be obtruded on our Church courts, and discussed by Christian ministers and elders with all the acrimony, bitterness and rancour with which such questions are usually discussed by men of the world. Our Assembly would present a mournful spectacle of strife and debate. Commissioners from the Northern would meet with Commissioners from the Southern Confederacy, to wrangle over the questions which have split them into two Confederacies, and involved them in furious and bloody war. They would denounce each other, on the one hand, as tyrants and oppressors, and on the other, as traitors and rebels. The Spirit of God would take His departure from these scenes of confusion, and leave the Church lifeless and powerless, an easy prey to the sectional divisions and angry passions of its members." (Min. 1861.)

In substance it is here said, better be separate than to mix politics with religion.

It should be recalled, in this connection, that Dr. Hodge, speaking of the action of 1861 in his own behalf, and in behalf of about sixty other members of that Assembly, published to the world the following judgment: "It pronounces or assumes a particular interpretation of the Constitution. This is a matter clearly beyond the jurisdiction of the Assembly. * * * * The General Assembly, in thus deciding a political question, and in making that decision practically a condition of membership to the Church, has, in our judgment, *violated the Constitution of the Church and usurped the prerogative of its divine Master.*"

In reviewing the situation at its meeting, 1865, just after the war had closed in the field, the General Assembly, South, says:

"How often both of these great principles have been trampled into the dust within a few years past, melancholy facts most fully attest. Of all such utter confusion of the things of Cæsar with the things of God, it becomes our people to beware, and against it faithfully to bear witness. The events passing before us bring up with fresh power the importance of keeping in mind this very point, this vital truth, that the Church of Christ is indeed a *spiritual* kingdom, and is *therefore* like Mount Zion that abideth forever. The Church is safe through the deluge, but only in her own ark, not in the Ark of the State. It is owing to this fact, and to this only, that she rides out the storms that leave the shores of this world strewn with the wreck of everything which the hand of man has constructed."

"During the prevalence of this war, 'the higher powers' actually bearing rule over most of our bounds, and to which under the word of God we were required to be 'subject,' were the government of the Confederate States, and those of the several States constituting it. By the event of the war, the first has been overthrown, and the second, as constituents thereof, are changed. The 'higher powers,' now bearing rule over us, are confessedly the government of the United States, and those existing in the States wherein we reside. The rightfulness of these several authorities, or to which of them the allegiance of our people, as citizens, was, or is primarily due, are matters upon which a judicatory of the Church has no right to pronounce judgment. The relation of the Church of Christ to civil governments is not one *de jure*, but *de facto*. As right and good, or wrong and wicked, they rise and fall by the agency or permission of God's Providence. In either case, the attitude of the Church towards them is essentially the same. As long as they stand and are acknowledged, obedience is to be enjoined as a duty, factious resistance condemned as a sin. But in regard to conflicts between existing governments, or as to movements in society, peaceful or otherwise, to effect political changes, the Church as such has no more control over them than it has over the polls of the country. If it has authority to uphold on the one side, it has equal power to condemn on the other; if to suppress a political movement, then also to instigate it. In truth it has neither; and to assert the contrary is to corrupt the Church in its principles, forever embroil it with the strifes of the world and plunge it headlong into ruin.

"Under these views, and considering the extraordinary conflict through which the country has passed, as well as the extraordinary circumstances in which it is now placed, it is incumbent upon us to exhort you, brethren, 'to obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Fulfil with scrupulous fidelity all your obligations to the governments of the land; remembering the duty of this compliance, 'not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.' 'For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.'"

These views are forcibly repeated in 1866:

"Upon no one snbject is the mind of this Assembly more clearly ascertained, upon no one doctrine is there a more solid or perfect agreement amongst those whom this Assembly represents, than the non-secular and non-political character of the Church of Jesus Christ.

"The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual, that of the State includes the exercise of force. The constitution of the Church is a divine revelation, the constitution of the State must be determined by human reason and the course of providential events. The Church has no right to construct a government for the State, and the State has no right to frame a creed or policy for the Church. They are as planets moving in different orbits, and unless each is confined to its own tract, the consequences may be as disastrous in the moral world as the collision of different spheres in the world of matter.' The early assertion of this radical distinction, at the very opening of our history, commits us to the maintenance and defense of the crown rights of the Redeemer, whether on the one hand they be usurped by the State, or whether, on the other, they be renounced by any portion of God's professing people. Summoned thus in the providence of God to contend for the same principles for which our martyr fathers of the Scottish Reformation testified even to the death, and which the fathers of the Southern Presbyterian Church labored so earnestly to secure and rejoiced in having obtained their full recognition by the civil government in America, it would be most happy if all those in the different branches of the Presbyterian family who are called to renew the protest, could be united in one homogeneous body for the reassertion of Christ's royal supremacy in and over His spiritual kingdom, the Church. The scattered testimony of separate and individual witnesses would deepen in intensity if gathered into one volume and rolled against those who would place the crown of Jesus upon the head of Cæsar. In view of all which, this Assembly would tender the hand to all who are of like mind with us as to the doctrines of grace and to the order and discipline of God's house: that as one compacted Church, we may oppose a breakwater against the current which is sweeping from its moorings our common Protestantism, until the doctrine of the Church as a free spiritual commonwealth shall regain its ascendancy not only over the Presbyterian but over the whole American Protestant mind." Minutes, 1866.

Now, it should be borne in mind that the Assembly South intended the expression of these oft-repeated Old School views to be antagonistic *in principle* to those of the Assembly North, to which utterance was given during and after the late war between the States, against which the Declaration and Testimony Protested, and against which the Synod of Missouri, in common with others, raised

in clarion tones her voice of renunciation and warning, and presented a front, which though broken by those unequal to the occasion, has remained firm and unyielding to this present time.

It has been retorted that the Assembly South accepted the same principle of action as the Assembly North, and that the only difference was in the sectional application of it. "*Physician, heal thyself.*" So far as the course and position of the Synod of Missouri is concerned in opposing the old Assembly, there is not the shadow of foundation for such a retort; nor can this counter accusation against the Assembly South be sustained. There is nothing in the records upon which it can fix, in the whole career of the Assembly South, that gives an apparently substantial foundation for this *ad hominem* retort, if it is not found in a single sentence in a pastoral letter of the Assembly, 1862, addressed, as they state, to the ministers and members of our churches, and to the young men of our congregations in the army of the Confederate States." Here is that sentence: "We have been called on to witness the desolations of the land, and to mourn over the wastes of Zion, created by the havoc of war; and from all our chnrches we hear the report that the ranks of the armies of our national independence are crowded with the noblest of our brethren, and with the choicest of our youth, who have rushed to the rescue of the Republic, driven by the impulses of patriotism, and in obedience to the calls of God and our country."

Now the most that can be said of this passage is that the clause, "*in obedience to the calls of God*," assumes and implies, an endorsement of their position in the abitrament of a political issue, as right and just and dutiful before God. Undoubtedly, by *implification* and *inference*, the principle of the Constitution of the Church, that "Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical," trembled in their grasp at that dread moment. But candor compels the acknowledgement that this incidental statement and all other "scant allusions to the historical reality of a great struggle then pending," were only transient lapses from the articulate and dogmatic position of the body making them. They were transient *inconsistencies*, and were not accordant with the formally avowed stand of the body on the great constitutional principle involved. And truth requires the recognition of the fact that the Assembly has formally and repeatedly acknowledged these utterances—I use its language—to be "INCONSISTENT with the judicially pronounced principle upon which the Southern Assembly entered upon its troubled career."

The Assembly is entitled to the benefit of this explanation and disavowal. It placed itself at the outset on the position of the undivided Assembly before the war, making "no other change" than of name, and specifically and articulately in opposition to the departure from it in 1861. That it faltered at all amidst the pressure and confusion of the times, is not the surprise, but rather that it did not fall away from the truth like others. The surprise is that its garment of praise, as a spiritual body, was not burned up instead of only being scorched a little, and having upon it only the smell of fire. The surprise is that it has had the grace to acknowledge before the world its *inconsistency* in any transient departure, and to show its appreciation of the superior claims of the consistency of truth and principle over a false consistency with self in error, and to distinctly and emphatically re-avow and proclaim to the world that it stands upon, not its errors and departures, as has been the case with others, but upon the original Old School strict construction principles of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Awaking as from a terrible delirium and finding that a false and treacherous principle had, in an interval of paroxysm, stealthily insinuated itself into its bosom, it hurled it with indignation from its embrace, and placed its heel upon it as a deadly viper. Actions speak, if possible, louder than words in vindication of the truth in this case.

The Synod of Kentucky became, like your Synod, the chosen victim of the *ipso facto* "edict," and afterward, without compromise, and upon explicit terms, saving everything in its position or yours, assumed organic relations, still maintained, with the Southern Assembly, which, in consummating the union, took this action:

"That the Assembly feels free solemnly to assure the Synod of Kentucky not only of our cordial approval of, and sincere concurrence substantially in, the Synod's statement of doctrine and constitutional principles, but of our sincere joy to find our brethren of Kentucky so ready to unite with us in solemn covenant, with a view, among other things, to the advancement and maintenance of these doctrines and principles as against the apparent Erastian tendencies of our American Protestantism."

This statement, thus satisfactorily concurred in by the Assembly, South, was made under the intelligent eyes of such men as the Rev. Drs. Stuart Robinson, S. R. Wilson and S. B. McPheeters, whom your Synod delights, and has reason, to honor, and whose eventful struggle for the spirituality of Christ's kingdom has become a part of the history of the American Church.

Now, if these things be so, what do we find in the position of your Synod that distinguishes it from that of the Southern Assembly? It would really seem that the only thing important to be considered in determining the question before you, that remains, is merely *territorial* and *formal*. Your *peculiar territory* is, of course, inalienable, but would not a formal union with those who hold the standards with like mind, give breadth, depth and power to the outflow of *your* Christian sympathies and to the inflow of the blessings of sanctified fellowship with brethren who feel and declare themselves to be one with you in all that distinguishes you from others as a portion of the visible Church of Christ? As Presbyterians, to whose principles and order you are everywhere spoken of as staunchly devoted, you must and do, of course, recognize the importance of the principle, whilst you exercise all due discretion and liberty in its application to your particular case and situation "that the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically *the Church*." The social principle in all its power is organized and sanctified by our precious religion, and the communion of different parts of the visible Church which are one in spirit, faith and order, if of God's appointment, as we believe, should be, and God designs it to be, a means of grace like unto a participation in the visible sacraments.

You will not fail to observe that I have assumed that you are strictly one with the Southern Assembly in doctrine and in the reception of the doctrinal standards. In this respect, the Assembly South occupies the same ground, walks in the same "old paths," as the undivided Assembly before the war, without the slightest qualification or change. The work of revising the Book of Discipline and Form of Government upon which the Assembly of 1857 entered, does not touch the doctrinal symbols, but was resumed by the Southern Assembly sometime since, with the view, *if possible*, of guarding in the future against such loose and unwarrantable interpretations of the governmental symbols as precipitated your Synod into such trouble. That conservative and well meant work is still pending, and there is no portion of the Church whose experience and voice would have greater weight than yours in settling the result, so as to preclude loose construction.

Moreover, it is the simple truth that the Southern General Assembly did not compromise its Old School position in any respect in

receiving the New School into union "on the basis of our symbols of doctrine and order, interpreted and adhered to according to the plain and obvious sense of the ordination engagemetns," and under "the existing charter" of their own body.

An important matter is now pending and in a most favorable aspect, it is understood, having an important bearing on the view that the Christian world takes of the Southern Assembly as a sound and conservative body. Of all the offspring of the Reformation, no Christian body stands higher in Europe or America than the body which has commonly been styled the Dutch Reformed Church. It is the first, the oldest Presbyterian Church in America.

The first occupation of New York took place, 1613, by the Dutch. It was a military post, in the interest of the fur trade, till 1624, when an agricultural settlement was made, care being taken to send over *a minister* and *a schoolmaster*. Forty years afterward, 1664, when the Dutch surrendered to the British, emigration from Holland was checked, and the English became the language of the government, and the Episcopal Church was known as the English Church.

The first English sermon was preached in the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, 1764; and in 1867 the word Dutch was dropped from the title of the body, as that language is no longer used. The Amsterdam Classis, or Presbytery, not only planted and fostered this early Dutch Presbyterianism, but likewise sent over the first German Reformed ministers, as they were all of the same faith and order. The German branch has dropped the word German, and is now known as the *Reformed Church in the United States;* as the Holland branch is now known (since 1867) as the *Reformed Church in America.*

"This Church has been distinguished by a steady and united adherence to her standards and order, and, at the same time, by a kind and friendly relation to other evangelical denominations. She has enjoyed peace within her own bosom, while agitating questions have troubled and even rent other churches. Her pacific character, her freedom from the ultraisms of the day, her evangelical principles, the peculiar features of her government and order, and the attitude in which she has been found by the side of other evangelical denominations, all tend to commend her to the favorable regard of al l the friends of evangelical truth, who desire 'the peace and prosperity' of the Church of Christ." (Hist., etc., by their Board, p. 23.)

The Heidelberg Catechism stands with them as the Westminster with you, and was published about eighty years previous (1563), and

perhaps no symbol of the Christian Church was ever received with such universal approbation. The statements of doctrine are in some respects better than the Westminster, and the two thoroughly coincide: there is the same coincidence in bold outline in the matter of Government, it being strictly Presbyterial. The Northern Assembly has virtually overtured them, as yourselves, for a union. There is, however, supposed to be no prospect of its accomplishment, as, during the two years since its occurrence, no responsive steps have been taken. Besides, the General Synod, which answers to our General Assembly, in June last, subsequent to the meeting of the Southern Assembly, appointed a committee of eight to see what steps were practicable with reference to a closer union with *that* body.

"The following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, The Corresponding Delegate from the Presbyterian Church in the United States (South), expressed to this Synod the interest which his Church feels in the hope of closer relations with our own; and

WHEREAS, So formal an overture from so large and respectable a body of kindred faith and order is deserving of the most courteous attention.

Resolved, That a committee of five ministers and three elders be appointed to consider carefully the matter of the desirableness and feasibility of the proposed relations, and to report thereon, if possible, to the next General Synod.

"The following were appointed the Committee, the President being added by a vote of the Synod: Revs. H. D. Ganse, Joachim Elmendorf, B. Van Zandt, P. D. Van Cleef, Elbert S. Porter, E. T. Corwin, and the Elders, Robert H. Pruyn, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen and Frederick Hugleson." (Min. Gen. Synod, 438.)

That Committee is now pending, and I think it can be said with propriety that the movement meets a most cordial response on both sides.

According to the minutes of 1872, the Presbyterian Church, South, has 912 ministers and licentiates, 1545 churches, 91,208 communicants, 11 synods and 56 presbyteries; total moneys contributed and expended in sustaining the work of the Church during the past year, $1,083,799. Of this sum, $41,004 were devoted to foreign missions, $51,899 to sustentation and domestic missions, and $47,532 to education, making a total, to these special objects, of $140,435.

The Reformed Church in America, according to the minutes of 1872, has 507 ministers, 491 churches, 65,217 communicants, 4 (particular) synods and 40 presbyteries (or classes); total moneys contributed and expended in sustaining the work of the Church during the past year, $684,251. Of this sum, $65,178 were devoted to foreign missions, $35,478 to domestic missions, $44,834 to education, making a total, to these special objects, of $145,485. Its total for church uses is $300,000 less than the Southern Church, but for missions and education, $5,000 more.

"The Presbyterian Church in the United States" has two theological seminaries—one is Union Seminary, in Virginia, with 52 students, the other is Columbia Seminary, at Columbia, S. C., with 50 students, making 102 theological students. Both these seminaries have considerable endowments.

"The Reformed Church in America" has also two theological seminaries, one at New Brunswick, N. J., with 22 students, and it is one of the best endowed seminaries in the world; the other is Hope College, at Holland, Michigan, which is feeble; it embraces a literary and theological course, and has 8 theological students.

In the event of a union of the three bodies, there would be occasion for considering the adjustment of various institutions, and why should not Columbia Seminary and Hope College be concentrated with your own Westminster College, and thus found one of the grandest educational institutions in America within the bounds of the Synod of Missouri?—west of the Mississippi, and in the very *heart of the Missouri-Mississippi Valley*. The question of transferring Columbia Seminary to Memphis has already been discussed, and hence it is within the bounds of both reason and propriety to suggest the transfer above indicated; and three strong seminaries would be abundantly adequate to the work of the united Churches, and one seminary would lie within the bounds of each constituent of this triple union.

The Presbyterian Church, South, then, has 25,000 more members, 400 more ministers, 70 more theological students and 1000 more churches than the Reformed Church, which has three synods in the East and one in the West; that of Chicago, with 72 churches and 5 classes, or presbyteries, covering the Northwestern States.

Were the union of your Synod and these two Churches to be consummated, the united body would embrace about 2,000 Churches,

1,500 ministers, 170,000 communicants, and 1,000,000 worshipers, expending about $2,000,000 yearly for church purposes.

The Reformed Church in America is limited to the Northern States, and, naturally enough, is not disposed to allow itself to be absorbed by a much larger body on the same territory, and differing from it in some important respects, for, as to politics and "civil affairs," it simply stands as your Synod and the Southern Assembly, on the conservative and orthodox position occupied by the Old School Assembly before the war. Hence it has no prejudice against uniting with the Presbyterian Church, South, and feels that its pent up energies, which are neither few nor small, will there find an outlet through a co-operation with like-minded brethren.

It may be set down as highly probable that this union will take place between these three bodies which God, in his good providence, seems to have prepared each for the other. If so, the result will be a grand old Presbyterian Church once more, as broad as the whole of the States and Territories, and free from sectionalism and latitudinarianism. It is evident that such a united and conservative body will stand in a relation to the present Northern Assembly quite analogous to that, in former days, of the Old to the New School, and there can be no doubt that a most important elective influence will go forth from it, drawing to and within itself, like a mighty magnet, those conservative members of the Northern Assembly who are not satisfied with the transformation of the standards at the hands of revolutionary agitators within the past twelve years.

The bearing on your future, as a Synod, of this most important fact of God's providence, which it seems to me you are not at liberty and will not be disposed to disregard is most interesting, but needs no enforcement from me; I merely call attention to it, that I may indulge the hope that it will be favorably and fully considered.

Neither the Southern Assembly nor the Reformed Church in America has any organization in Missouri, so that the three bodies occupy adjacent but entirely distinct territories. Surely there is a good providence in so preparing each for the others, that there need be no going nor emigrating about it, but simply a faithful recognition of the existing spiritual oneness in an organic, visible union. And the united body will be entitled to bear this grand historic title—

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

With this view of the situation of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.)

before my mind, I would venture to suggest a scheme of action which, it is believed, embraces the salient points to be guarded and explicitly recognized and accepted as the basis of any ecclesiastical union that may be formed. It does not contemplate any unqualified act of union with any other ecclesiastical organization whatever, but it does contemplate as early a union as may be wise and practicable with brethren who are understood to hold the same doctrines and government, and the same principles of church polity and order. Whilst an unconditional union might be considered unwise and inexpedient for various reasons, yet a conditional union, *i. e.*, a union conditioned upon an open and formal recognition of your principles, and a disavowal and repeal, if need be, of everything incompatible therewith, will probably commend itself to favorable consideration. Such is the union contemplated in this scheme:

WHEREAS, The relation of the Synod of Missouri (O.S.) with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, commonly styled Old School, was in full rightful and legal force up to the time of the dissolution of that Assembly, Nov. 12, 1869, when its identity was lost and merged in a "Joint Convention" with the General Assembly, commonly styled New School, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and,

WHEREAS, The Synod of Missouri (O. S.) has existed as an Independent body since 1869, not by any direct or other act of separation on its own part, nor by any constitutional or lawful proceedings on the part of that General Assembly with which it had always, previously been in connection—the actual relation being in suspense for some three years, from 1866 to 1869, like that of a wife repudiated but not divorced — arbitrarily pushed aside for no fault of hers, and denied her rights and privileges, though the relation itself still rightfully and really existed; and,

WHEREAS, The Old School Synod of Missouri, as an Independent body, without the taint of schism upon it, has been entirely free and at liberty to choose and enter into new relations without abandoning or compromising any of its legal or ecclesiastical rights or interests by so doing; and,

WHEREAS, It appears that the Reformed (Dutch) Church of the North, and the Presbyterian Church of the South, are both thoroughly Calvinistic in doctrine and presbyterial in government; and that both are sound and conservative on the principles of Church government and policy for which this Synod has contended, and in defense of which she still maintains her position which the most solemn obligations of duty forbid her to surrender or compromise in the interest of any alliance; and,

WHEREAS, There appears to be an encouraging prospect that the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, and the General Assembly

of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, which was, with the Independent Synod of Missouri, a part of the undivided General Assembly (O. S.) before the war, will form an organic union as the result of the negotiations now auspiciously pending between those two bodies; and,

WHEREAS, It is believed that in the good providence of God the present appears to be a propitious time for the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) to take a definite step in contemplation of a closer union with those of like faith and principles,

Resolved, That a Committee on Union, consisting of —— be now appointed by this Synod.

Resolved, 2, That the following statement of the position of this Synod be placed in the hands of said committee, to-wit:

1. The standards which make up the constitution of the Church recognized by the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, The Form of Government, The Discipline and Directory for Worship.

2. These standards are strictly construed in their historic and proper sense, as, e. g., they were by the undivided Presbyterian Church (O. S.), before the late war.

3. The Courts or Assemblies of the Church, including the General Assembly when there is such a body as distinguished from the Synod and lower courts, exist by the express law of the Church, and must be in subjection to the same, and are not competent at any time, or under any circumstances, to act without such authority or contrary thereto, or to attempt to supply any supposed deficiency therein, under any exigency except in the manner and way therein provided.

4. The "civil affairs" which belong to the sphere of the individual conscience and private judgment, such as systems of labor-political dogmas, and conduct respecting the nature, form, administration or change of human government, are not to be handled nor concluded by the utterances of the Church courts thereon, whether in their moral or their political bearing, but are to be left where Christ left the payment of tribute (Matt. xxii. 15–22; Mark xii. 13–17; Luke xx. 20–26), viz.: within the sphere of the individual conscience before God and of individual liberty, not to be infringed nor restrained by any authority unless that authority can be distinctly shown from the word of God as received and set forth in the standards of the Church.

5. As the General Assembly has no right nor power to act in any case, whether purely ecclesiastical or not, except in subordination and obedience to the constitution of the Church, this Synod cannot acquiesce directly or by implication in that theory of our Church government, which makes the General Assembly the final judge of its own powers in any case; and therefore this Synod cannot approve or sanction, nor wittingly consent to hold or to lose any property, franchises or rights, upon any ruling of the civil courts

that makes the decisions of the ecclesiastical tribunal of highest grade in any church final and binding upon them, the civil courts, in their application to the case before them, when property, rights and civil interests are drawn into question in such "case," for two reasons:— 1. The civil courts have no right to abandon the exercise of the functions with which the law invests them in their jurisdiction over, and protection of, the property of the Church on the established principles of the law; and 2, for the farther reason that such a ruling, *pro tanto*, transforms the ecclesiastical into civil courts of last resort. If the decision of the Church court is final, and its constitutionality and regularity cannot be inquired into by the civil court when property rights and interests depend thereon, then it is farcical to seek redress in the civil courts. And we would respectfully submit that such a confounding of things civil and things ecclesiastical, things secular and things spiritual, is not sanctioned but forbidden with unparalleled emphasis by the separateness of Church and State in this favored land. One great virtue of the principles for which the Synod of Missouri has contended, is found in their preservation of the kingdom of Christ from entanglements with the things of this world and in securing to the citizens of that kingdom, the members of the Church, a status and treatment solely as the subjects of his laws revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

6. This Synod cannot surrender the constitutional right that it has exercised, to interpose its authority to stay the operation within its bounds of any deliverance of the General Assembly when deemed by the Synod of questionable constitutionality, until the ruling shall be sent down to the presbyteries as provided. (F. G. xii. 6.) The Presbyterian church is not governed by the decisions of the Assembly as arbitrary canons of ultimate authority, but solely by and as the standards of the Church provide.

Resolved, 3, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) is prepared and willing, *Deo volente*, to unite, *ex animo*, with any portion of the visible Church of Christ upon the basis above indicated.

Resolved, 4, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) finds in the record of the General Assembly, North, sufficient reason to withhold, for the present, any offer of union with that body, and also, good cause to decline any overtures of union from it, as, we regret to say, we do not see how an organic union with it could now be effected on "conditions mutually acceptable." The hope of ultimate union by virtue of that body returning to the true theory of its standards, is still cherished, and whilst we heartily reciprocate all Christian and brotherly courtesies, we pray that God will bless our conscientiousand dutiful testimony against their errors to the hastening of their recovery.

Resolved, 5, That we congratulate our brethren of the Reformed Dutch Church, and of the Presbyterian Church, South, on their pending negotiations for union, the Lord having apparently prepared and preserved the one for the other, to the greater glory of his own

† The same violation of principle is involved in the Mobile, 1904, action of the Southern General Assembly on Polygamy
1908

great name; and it is our prayer that He may not give them "the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

And as the negotiations now pending between those two bodies necessarialy involve every point in which the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) could feel an interest; and believing that the voice of this Synod would be more highly respected and influential in the bringing of these negotiations to a favorable issue by the steps following than by any direct intervention in the same—

Resolved, 6, That a delegate be appointed to visit and be authorized and directed to lay the foregoing statement of the position and principles of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) before the next General Synod of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, to meet in the Second Reformed Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey, the first Wednesday (6th) of June, 1873, for the information and consideration of the same.

Resolved, 7, That the above-named committee on union be authorized and directed to visit the General Assembly to meet in the Presbyterian church of Little Rock, Arkansas, on the third Thursday in May, 1873, and lay before that body the above-named statement of the position and principles of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) and the resolutions accompanying the same

Resolved, 8, That the Committee on Union shall not act as provided in resolution 7, unless a majority of the Presbyteries of this Synod shall first have approved of this plan of procedure; the chairman of said committee to receive his information from the stated clerk of Synod, to whom the several spring Presbyteries are hereby directed to send immediate information of their action approving or disapproving the step contemplated in resolution 7.

Resolved, 9, That in the event that the said General Assembly, to meet at Little Rock, shall adopt and agree to said statement expressed under resolution 2; and in the farther event that the said statement shall be transmitted to the Presbyteries of the said General Assembly and receive the approval of a majority of the same, then and upon the concurrence of these conditions and events, and not otherwise, the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) shall be, and shall be deemed and treated, and shall consider herself, and so act, as in organic relation with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and fully entitled to all the rights and privileges, and bound by all the duties arising from such ecclesiastical relation under the Westminster standards of the Presbyterian Church; *provided*, however, that nothing in this act, or in anything done in pursuance thereof, invalidate any property or chartered right, franchise or privilege of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.)

Resolved, 10, That the Presbyteries of this Synod are recommended to appoint commissioners to the General Assembly, to meet in Little Rock, 1873, who, in the event of the above-named basis of union being adopted by the said General Assembly, may sit as corresponding or enrolled members thereof, but the provision, for the submis-

sion of this paper to the Presbyteries of the said Assembly, and their approval of the same, shall remain of full force and effect.

Resolved, 11, Finally, that the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), as a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, acting upon the great commission to go into the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature, knows no north and no south, no east and no west, but recognizes the truth, in all its breadth and universality, that "the field is the world," and that in the matter of visible union the Synod is influenced wholly and only by motives growing out of an unbiased devotion to the Head of that kingdom which is not of this world

There is importance attaching to an adherence to the record in an explicit avowal of the constitutional relation of your Synod to its General Assembly up to the time of its dissolution in 1869, as it fortifies the position of the Synod with respect to any legal issues; and the same is true of its entire independence and freedom in the choice of new relations since that event.

The red tape that may appear in the reference to Presbyteries of any act of organic union will be seen to be in the right place and indispensable, when it is remembered that such a union as is contemplated should have a constitutional and organic force, and hence it should not rest on a bare resolution of the Assembly or the Synod, but receive the solemn sanctions of a reference to the Presbyteries, as the book provides for constitutional rules, and as has been wisely done in other cases of union. After such a reference and action, no question could so much as be insinuated as to the unanimity of the uniting bodies or the validity and force of the uniting act.

And now I am done, and should, perhaps, apologize for having extended this communication so much beyond what was contemplated, or, perhaps, for having made it at all. But I have not written because I supposed you ignorant of these things, for I know there are those of your number who have a personal acquaintance with and experience of them, which I have not; but, rather, I write as one looking on in quiet and from a distance, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and, if possible, to cast a ray of light, feeble though it may be, yet a certain ray of light on the path which I feel persuaded that my brethren of the Synod may safely take. I somewhat regret that I did not take up my pen at an earlier date; but that I have been induced to do so at all is rather my own surprise, after having taken no active part, either in the Church courts or out of them, in these momentous public discussions, during the past ten years, notwithstanding the intense interest I have all the

while felt in them. I now give utterance to these views with no other thought than that of subserving the cause of truth and righteousness in holding together and strengthening all the congregations of a church that I love and a Synod that I once faithfully and laboriously served, officially, for eight years, and have deeply sympathized with in all her troubles.

May the Good Shepherd lead his flock in green pastures and beside still waters.

Your brother in Christ, S. S. LAWS.

The foregoing communication, allowing for a few changes mainly referring to the meeting of Synod as past instead of future, was written just before the meeting of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), with the view of laying it before that body in a printed form. It was, however, withheld, and the Synod happily arrived at a wise and prudent conclusion with wonderful unanimity and cordiality, without debate. The subject, however, was thoroughly canvassed, and generally well understood. Indeed, the course of action was, in general, too plain and obvious to need argument. It was, in view of the recognized state of facts, agreed on spontaneously. As is obvious upon the reading of it, and especially in the light of the discussion that precedes it, the scheme of action above submitted contemplated the same end—viz., the union of the three bodies or churches, and substantially the course of action so harmoniously agreed on; so that I cannot but rejoice in it with you most heartily, feeling fully assured that its transparent naturalness, candor, simplicity, and wisdom, under the guidance of the Spirit of all grace, will commend it to the hearty approval, not only of your own people, but of the Christian world. It would, perhaps, have been a valuable help had the Synod placed in the hands of the Committee a statement of its position, as is suggested under the second resolution.

Although the Synod has taken action, yet, in the pending state of its affairs, it has been thought that the contents of this letter may still be of some service.

I will now give the action of the Synod. It is taken from the *Old School Presbyterian*, Oct. 18, 1872:

"As to the Synod's future—a question which has excited so much discussion, and in regard to which painful solicitude was felt in every part of our Church—it was settled, without a word of debate, not only harmoniously, but UNANIMOUSLY. We do not doubt that the

action of the Synod will be received with entire satisfaction by our people, and that future developments will prove it to be eminently judicious.

The following paper, setting forth that action, we insert here, so that our readers may have it at the earliest moment:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS.

Rev. A. P. Forman, chairman of the Committee on Ecclesiastical Relations, made the following report:

"Your Committee, to whom was referred the statement of the votes of the several Presbyteries on the overture of the Synod, and the whole subject of our ecclesiastical relations, beg leave to report, that

"WHEREAS, There is a strong probability that a union at no distant day will be consummated between the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, constituting together a strong, conservative, thoroughly orthodox, and truly national Presbyterian Church, and with which our Synod may unite without the loss of any of its churches, ministers, or members; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1st. That this Synod does hereby express its deep interest in the proposed union of the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and our anxiety that it may soon be consummated, and our willingness to co-operate therein and be united with them.

"*Resolved*, 2dly. That this Synod appoint a committee of—ministers and—elders to meet with similar committees that may be appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Reformed Church in America, to confer together with them in reference to the desirableness and practicability of the union of the three Churches, and, if the way be clear, to take all the necessary steps preparatory to such union, and to report the result of their conference or conferences to this Synod at its next regular meeting.

"*Resolved*, 3dly. That in anticipation of the consummation of the union between the three bodies above named, to which Synod now sees no serious obstacles, it will not be considered premature in any of our Presbyteries, who may choose to do so, to send commissioners to the General Assembly of the United Church, who shall take their seats in that body when the union is accomplished.

"[Signed] A. P. FORMAN, Chairman.
"L. P. BOWEN,
"W. W. TRIMBLE,
"A. MUNSON,
"J. M. CHANEY,
"DAVID COULTER,
"WM. CHRISMAN.

"The report was unanimously adopted, after which Synod united with Dr. Brank in thankful acknowledgment to Almighty God for his goodness in bringing the Synod harmoniously to a conclusion with reference to this matter.

"The blanks in the report were filled with three ministers and two ruling elders, and the following brethren were unanimously chosen for that purpose:

"*Principals*—Ministers John L. Yantis, John Montgomery, and R. P. Farris, and Elders Logan Hunton and D. H. Bishop. *Alternates*—Ministers A. P. Forman, R. G. Brank, Edward Martin, and Elders Edward Bredell and Dr. W. M. McPheeters."

Whether the triple union be consummated, as is confidently anticipated, or not, the fact that the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) has moved with equal step toward two accordant bodies, one wholly in the North and the other wholly in the South, forever silences all imputations of partizan feeling and sectionalism as attaching to the providential result of this wisely-instituted negotiation.

The Synod also took the following action in response to the Committee of the Detroit Assembly, whose appointment to "visit" the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) is explained above:

THE COMMITTEE ON ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS

Made a report with reference to the address of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States *of America*. It was adopted, and is as follows:

"The Committee on Ecclesiastical Relations would report the following minute for adoption by the Synod:

"Synod does hereby express its great gratification at the earnest and eloquent remarks of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., delegate to this body from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, bringing with him the Christian salutations of that body, the expressions of their deep, heartfelt sympathy, and their desire to be brought upon grounds of closer union on conditions mutually acceptable.

"Dr. Dickson having furthermore earnestly requested the appointment of a committee to confer with the committee appointed by the Assembly at its last meeting, and having invited us to make a statement of our grievances, and of the causes which have led us into our present position, with the hope that at least the obstacles to a more fraternal correspondence and co-operation, if not of organic union, may all be removed, Synod with pleasure accedes to this request; for, although we were formerly denied a hearing at the bar of the General Assembly of the Old School Presbyterian Church, with which we were then in legitimate connection, yet, with the hope that the glory of God may be promoted and the cause of our blessed

Master advanced, Synod hereby appoints Rev. James H. Brookes, Rev. R. P. Farris, and Mr. D. H. Bishop a committee of conference, and enjoins upon the committee to state with all candor, though in Christian love, our wrongs and grievances, and the causes which have led to our present position, and the obstacles to our union with the Presbyterian Church in United States of America, and to report the result of the conference to the next meeting of Synod."—*Old School Presbyterian, October* 18, 1872.

The "visit" of Dr. Dickson accomplished all that the body sending him could have reasonably expected or asked. Certainly he acquitted himself with signal address and courtesy, and his Christian spirit and greeting were appreciated and reciprocated with a cordiality, manliness and candor that must have commanded his own admiration. The appointment of a committee, as requested and urged by him, affords the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) a desirable opportunity of laying her case before the Christian, and especially the Presbyterian world. The passions of the war have now greatly subsided, and there is good hope that the truth, thus brought face to face with error, will vindicate successfully its superior claims. It is, perhaps, also a favorable circumstance that the course of the late Assembly at Detroit has already arrested attention, and elicited discussion. The future may be thus forecast: If the principles involved in the position of the Synod of Missouri be allowed a fair hearing, they will hold the attention of that body until a working majority comes back to them and re-asserts them; *or* they will act as an entering wedge and divide the conservative from the radical and revolutionary element, so as to facilitate their attraction, by the mighty power of a sanctified elective affinity, into union with the old-fashioned Church, which will, under God, result from the triple union now so auspiciously pending.

It has been the main purpose of this letter to set forth the underlying principles of the issues still resting on the Presbyterian Churches and causing division. These principles are as palpable and real to the mind of any ecclesiastical lawyer, or of any intelligent Christian, as the tools in the hands of a mechanic, or the pen in the fingers of him who writes with it. They are not remote and intangible abstractions, but, as the original word, *principium*, implies, fountains and sources of action. Not life itself is more real; and, when held to view, the poorest intellect has a lively appreciation of their power and value. In his admirable work on contracts, Mr. Parsons explains how the law seeks to accomplish its aims "by means of

principles — that is, by means of *truths, ascertained, defined* and *so expressed as to be practical and operative.*" *Principles*, then, as it is here capitally expressed, are not barren abstractions, nor dreamy and vague impressions, but the stuff that real life is made of — *they are practical and operative truths, so ascertained and defined as to take hold of and assert their influence over the mind and the life.* To ascertain, therefore, whether men really accept given principles of action, it is simply necessary to look into their lives. "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." Mat. vii. 20. This is the simple and everlasting test by means of which to distinguish between what men are really and what they profess. It is no unusual thing in these days to hear men say that they agree with the principles of the Declaration and Testimony, but differ from the signers of that paper in the application of them — *i. e.*, the principles are all right, provided you don't act on them, or provided you so act on them that those who hold and act on opposite principles will not find you in their way. The fact is, there is a sort of law of impenetrability which obtains in the moral world by which two opposite principles are exclusive of each other, and cannot occupy and control the same man at the same time: hence collisions, antagonisms and strife. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Has it ever been shown in what respect the principles of the Declaration and Testimony were misapplied? Has it ever been shown that any one of those principles is expressed in equivocal or evasive language, so as to mislead any simple minded, honest inquirer as to the truth meant to be enunciated? Has it ever been shown that there is any language in our English vocabulary, or in any other, in which they could have been clothed at the time, and under the circumstances of their utterance, that could have rendered them more "practical and operative"? Were the signers of that instrument denounced as slanderers and schismatics as a matter of *principle* or simply as a matter of *taste?* Was it a question as to the mere style and words in which accepted principles were expressed, or as to the truth of those principles? If men are honest in the declaration that they accept the principles of the Declaration and Testimony, then let them show it by acting in such a way as to square their conduct by those principles. Let them call on the united Assembly to purge itself of all complicity with the errors in doctrine and practice therein most signally reprobated. Moreover, let them exert themselves to do justice to the men who have been wronged and outraged because of a simple and

faithful adhesion to those principles, when it cost something to avow them. Let all property and advantages acquired by the opposite course be disgorged. Let every effort be made to repair the damage done the Church by the violent attempt made to overthrow the Declaration and Testimony itself, and to crush and overwhelm with degradation and disgrace all who stood on it. Anything short of conduct which will harmonise such professions with the truths involved, must leave those professions as empty pretentions, meant or calculated to deceive and mislead. "Then Saul (who is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said: 'O full of all subtility, and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?'" Acts xiii. 9–10. This is very severe language, and yet Elymas, against whom it was employed, was not guilty of hypocrisy or inconsistency, but assumed an attitude of *open* opposition to the truth, by a resort to deceptive arts and practices. The crown of hypocrisy had already been appropriated by Judas, the suicide.

It is a good point gained when it can be seen and shown plainly that men who differ do so on principle. When that is seen to be the case each can recognize the other as honest in his divergent conduct. Whereas, if both agree theoretically, their opposite courses of action necessarily must, and always do, call down crimination and recrimination; charges of inconsistency and dishonesty, of deceit and double dealing, and the worst passions and the bitterest epithets are provoked. Not so when there is an acknowledged difference of principle. Moreover, the first and most substantial step towards differing parties living in intelligent harmony, or towards furthering suitable measures for sincere and cordial union, is not to slur over or to disingenuously ignore real differences, but to ascertain wherein they rest on principle, or may be the result of misconception and misunderstanding. If men agree in principle sincerely and truly, a fair comparison of views should bring them together; but if they differ in principle, still, such comparison of views gives good promise of dissolving all false issues and of bringing out clearly to view the precise points of difference, and of guarding against misconception and consequent misrepresentation. As principles are not barren abstractions, but practical and operative truths, it necessarily implies either inconsistency or deceit for men who pursue opposite courses of conduct to pretend that they agree in their principles, and only

differ in their application of them, as it is the application of a principle that gives it all its value, force and character. When men differ in principle — *i. e.*, differ in what they accept as practical and operative truth, one receiving and acting on one thing as truth, and the other receiving and acting on its opposite as truth — the one extemporising Church government according to the reasonable suggestions of circumstances, and making ecclesiastical decisions final and binding where even vested civil rights are dependent thereon; the other, repudiating this, and administering Church government as a matter of express law, enacted by the Head of the Church, and regarding no ecclesiastical decision as binding unless strictly constitutional— *both* sides cannot be right. One or the other must be in error. And yet if neither can be brought to see its error, although *union* is impracticable, nevertheless both may, in good temper and freedom from bitterness, arrogance and dogmatism, live beside each other as good neighbors, each being answerable to the Master.

It is conceived that the difference between the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) and the Assembly, North, is one of principle involving, in general, the grand issues of *ecclesiology* or the nature of the Church, and specifically our constitutional Presbyterianism. There is something deeper and broader at stake than the *specific issues* of the Declaration and Testimony, even the veritable foundation principles of our ecclesiasticism under the practical operation of which such issues must be viewed and dealt with in times of peace as well as of war. Scientific investigators often receive some of their most valuable hints from their acknowledged mistakes; and there is equal reason why, and most happy would it be for the Church, should it candidly acknowledge mistakes and improve by them. The Church is not infallible, nor are Church courts. That prerogative belongs alone to the Head of the Church. Hence it is properly said in our standards: "All Synods or councils since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help to both." (C. F. xxxi. 3.) Pride of self-consistency is the most lamentable weakness that any Church court or Assembly ever rendered conspicuous upon its records. But consistency with the truth itself is indeed a jewel.

The Presbyterian, i. e., The Westminster Standards set forth a theory of the Church, its nature, its functions and relations. Have the Declaration and Testimony strict Constructionists the right

theory of those standards, or have the Latitudinarians? Has the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) the correct principles of interpretation and ecclesiastical action, or has the Assembly, North? These are fair questions, and their decision should heal the divisions of the Presbyterian family, and bring them all together as co-workers in the vindication of the claims of a truly spiritual commonwealth and in the conciliation of Christendom thereto. The manifold power of our glorious religion in subduing to our Savior the kingdoms of this world might then be conspicuously multiplied beyond what tongue can tell. L.

NOTE.—The reference, "M. E. Chs.," is to the article of April *Southern Review*, in book form; "D. P." is Distinctive Principles; a publication of the Presbyterian Board of Publication at Richmond, Va. The Dr. Patterson in the Detroit Assembly's committee should be Robert W. Patterson.

APPENDIX.

Correspondence between the "The Presbyterian Church in the United States" and "The Reformed Church in America," and the Synod of Missouri (O. S.)

I.

REPORT OF THE REV. J. H. BRYSON.

The Assembly then took up the order of the day—to hear the report of the Commissioner to the Reformed Church and to receive Dr. Van Zandt.

Rev. J. H. Bryson presented the following:

To the Moderator of the General Assembly to meet at Richmond, Va., on May 16th, 1872:

In accordance with the appointment of the last General Assembly at its sessions in Huntsville, Ala., I attended the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, which met in the city of Albany, New York, on June the 7th, 1871.

It affords me much pleasure to report that I was received by that body with the greatest cordiality and Christian friendship, as the first delegate from the General Assembly of our Church. My reception was an occasion of intense interest, as I was to respond to their friendly overtures. And when I stood up before that venerable Synod to assure them, that our General Assembly most cordially accepted their kind propositions touching a fraternal correspondence, and that I was commissioned to bear to them the warm salutations and Christian sympathies of our Church, every heart seemed to overflow with rejoicing at the happy issue of the matter they had ventured to propose. Again and again did I receive the warmest congratulations, touching the fraternal alliance that was now so favorably established between the two bodies. Nothing was wanting to make my mission everything I could wish for the beloved Church I was honored to represent; and I can not too strongly express the earnest and warm cordiality that characterized my reception by that noble Christian people.

The Synod heard with pleasure and profound interest all that I communicated touching our beloved Zion, her doctrines, her history, her trials, and the good work she was endeavoring to accomplish for the cause of our common Lord and King. They expressed their earnest gratification at the wonderful success that had attended all our operations, and assured us that they would ever feel a deep interest in all that pertained to our future welfare and prosperity.

On taking my leave, I was charged to bear back to the beloved Church I represented their warmest salutations and Christian sympathies, and I was instructed to give the assurance that they were ready, through the fraternal alliance now so favorably established, to co-operate with us in every suitable way to advance the interests of the glorious kingdom of our common Lord and Master.

During the sessions of the General Synod, the Rev. Dr. Van Zandt was appointed to attend the next session of our General Assembly, to be held in the city of Richmond, Va., on the 16th of May, 1872.

Very respectfully, J. H. BRYSON.

MR. BRYSON—I will say in addition that my reception was everything that I could wish for myself and for the Assembly. They gladly hailed the hour that brought the two bodies together in the great work of the Master. It was of course with some hesitation that they ventured to enter upon this correspondence, but when the Huntsville Assembly responded so cordially and so generously, no language that I can use could give you any conception of the warmth and cordiality with which that noble Christian people received me as your commissioner. They hail it as the opening of a happy future to both Churches—a future of usefulness and honor to the Master's cause.

II.

ADDRESS OF REV. DR. VAN ZANDT.

Rev. Dr. Van Zandt was introduced, and said:

MODERATOR: As the delegate of the "Reformed Church in America," I could desire no more favorable introduction to this Assembly than the report of your delegate to our General Synod, which has just been read. You have learned from that with what gratification our church received your worthy representative and reciprocated his expressions of fraternal kindness and confidence. His appearance among us was hailed as the formal acceptance, on your part, of the overtures of correspondence which we had ventured to propose, and I am here to-day to strengthen the bonds of our unity and, if possible, to draw it a little closer.

But I appear before you under circumstances which are somewhat peculiar, and if one who has so few claims to personal consideration may yet be regarded as representing his Church, my presence here is itself the evidence that the line of separation between us is not an impassible barrier. When I look around upon the familiar faces, and my heart responds to the fraternal greetings which meet me everywhere, I scarcely know whether I am at home or abroad. The immediate past seems like a dream of yesternight, and I am again one of yourselves, in the grand old Synod of Virginia. But as a son, after long years of absence, returns to his home, and is reminded by the marked consideration and kindness of his reception that be is now a welcome and honored guest, where as a rollicking boy he had enjoyed the freedom of one of the family, so I am recalled by the grateful, and yet embarrassing attentions which I have received on every hand, to my official character as the representative of another branch of His household "by whom the whole family in Heaven and on earth are named."

I am reminded by the terms of my commission that it is not to indulge in personal reminiscences that I am here; and yet it would be expecting too much to imagine, that in this place and presence I could be wholly oblivious to the past, or could so repress its crowding memories, as to avoid all allusions to the living and the dead. The scenes through which I have passed, and am passing now, call up before me the men with whom it was my privilege and joy to mingle here, in the amenities of social life and the responsibilities of the ministerial office. McPheeters, the gentle, loveable, heroic martyr; Moore, of the learned and eloquent pen and silvery tongue, among those from the gallant little presbytery of East Hanover, who have gone up higher; Foote, the historian, whose facile pen loved to trace the daring and devotion of those earlier worthies of kindred faith and feeling; Armistead, whose muscular frame and massive mind gave expression and emphasis to his ponderous thoughts; Green, of the eagle-eye and open heart, whose burning words yet failed to overtake the lightning thought of his electric mind; these and others from the Synod of Virginia, now in the General Assembly and Church of the first born in Heaven; these and others equally true and great and good, who yet remain, were my brethren as well as yours. They are my brethren still, and palsied be this tongue when for any cause, short of apostacy from God, it shall refuse to own the kindred or to bless the tie.

Sir, we are no strangers, and though I come to you from a foreign body, yet we are *one* in Christ our Head, and I am here to say that we are not your antagonists, your rivals, or your judges, but your brethren in Christ, who desire to ex-

emplify in our relations with you that highest type of Christian union possible to our present condition and circumstances "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

Sir, you know, as well as I, that there are certain cycles of religious thought, which though they have not the fixed periodicity, yet as certainly bring round sooner or later particular phases of popular opinion and feeling, as the revolution of the heavenly bodies bring around the alterations of heat and cold, summer and winter. Some one truth, or half-truth, seizes upon the public mind, and is magnified until it fills the whole field of vision, to the obscuration of every other truth, until, in turn, it gives place to another exaggeration. Hence, the recurrence of what may be styled religious epidemics, more or less wide-spread and virulent, but happily, not of long duration. The epidemic now prevalent in many quarters, springing out of the exaggeration of a false conception of Christian union, is the desire for an indiscriminate fusion of all evangelical churches in one grand conglomeration. The "seamless robe of Christ" is made a cover for all sorts of error of those who yet claim to hold the Head. And his prayer that his people "may all be one," which will certainly be fulfilled because it is His—is expected to find its accomplishment in the external organic union of the most discordant elements. Ignoring that inspired challenge to the common sense of mankind, "how can two walk together except they be agreed," the nominal union of those of every shade and complexion of opinion and practice, is counted the grand desideratum which is to introduce the millennial glories of the Church. Hence that spurious catholicity which "rejoiceth not in the truth," but would eliminate all that is distinctive in doctrine or practice for the empty sound of union and the aggregation of numbers.

It is not from any sympathy with that boastful liberality, which is illiberal only to those who are true to their convictions; it is not from any desire or purpose to absorb your organization into ours, or to be absorbed by you, that we have extended to you our fraternal greetings, and opened this correspondence. Though there are no differences between us sufficient to hinder our cordial co-operation as a united Church; though in doctrine identical, and in order not dissimilar, and, as I believe, one in spirit, yet I should regard a mutual fusion into a single Church as a calamity to both. What the changes of time and "the logic of events" may bring about in the future, is not for us to forecast. But at present we believe we have a mission which justifies our distinctive organization, and we are willing to concede a like conviction to you.

But, sir, the question has arisen in my mind, Is it not possible to utilize our present pleasant relations into something more than a formal interchange of courtesies? If our correspondence is to be anything more than a name, we would have your people, when they come among us, find a spiritual home in our churches, and your ministers a cordial welcome in our pulpits. (And, sir, if you continue to send us as delegates those who are as acceptable as your first representative, you need not be surprised if some of our rich congregations not only welcome them to their pulpits, but try to keep them there.) And so we would have our people, who find new homes on Southern soil, find also warm hearts among Southern Presbyterians, and recognition in your commonwealth of Israel. And if one of your eligible churches should see fit to lay violent hands upon any of our ministers, and make him its pastor, I think there are some of us who could bear the infliction with a very great deal of Christian resignation. And why cannot we co-operate in the missionary work, and the work of evangelization? The issues of our Board of Publication should not be unacceptable to your libraries, when some of them bear the imprints of names, or at least of a name, honored in your present councils. Your own literature will make its way among us, as the bands of our fellowship are more closely drawn; and as we know each other better, we will love each other more. Sir, I am speaking with the freedom of one who feels himself among brethren; and I think I am not exceeding my commission, and have not mistaken the spirit of those whom I represent, if I say that we would be glad to co-operate with you, and, through you, in that one most important and most difficult work, which is peculiarly your own, in the instruction, the elevation and evangelization of that portion of your population who, in their changed relations, are exposed to peculiar dangers. Voluntary organizations, with

fewer claims, and far less facilities than those which you could urge, are drawing largely upon the benevolence of our people for this object. But as yet we have heard little from you. Our people do not understand what you are doing in this direction, or would be willing and zealous to do, if the means were at your disposal. Is there not some one among you who could be spared long enough to set them right on this subject, and turn the current of their liberality into another and safer channel? It is not for me to intimate your course of action; but you will pardon me for calling your attention to a field of labor and usefulness in which I think we are able and willing to aid your endeavors.

I ought, perhaps, to tell you something of our Church and its progress. By the minutes of the last General Synod, which I have had the pleasure to lay upon your table, you will see that we number 4 synods, 33 classes, 467 churches, 510 ministers, 63,483 communicants. Our contributions for the year were, for congregational purposes, nearly a million of dollars, and for religious and benevolent objects $326,039. We have missionary stations in India, China, and Japan, and for this object, last year, expended $75,000. We have two theological seminaries, and two colleges under denominational influence and patronage. The year now drawing to a close has been observed by us as a centennial memorial, during which we purposed, and I doubt not have succeedeed in raising a million of dollars for purposes of Church extension.

I mention these facts to show that the Old Church which was planted on Manhatten Island before the foot of the Pilgrims touched Plymouth Rock, is not dead yet, but is rehabilitating herself for new endeavors to conserve and propagate that common faith enunciated in the symbols formed at Dordrecht, among the earliest and the most authoritative of the confessions of the Reformers. As the lineal descendants of the churches under the cross, who, in the thirty years struggle with Spain and Popery, won for themselves and us the heritage of truth and liberty, we come to bring our friendly greetings, to this latest born of the churches of our own faith and order, and to bid you God speed in your mission and work.

I thank you, Moderator and this Assembly, for the cordial reception which you have extended to me, and for your patience in listening to these remarks.

The Moderator responded:

With hearty good will we welcome you as a brother beloved in the Lord. We do so gladly, because of the warm-hearted reception which your body gave to our delegate; because we love and admire your grand and noble old Church; and because we recognize you as one with us. When you so beautifully spoke of your former associates, and mentioned the honored men whose character you so touchingly delineated, our hearts were filled with gladness. Oh! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. The memory of the men you mentioned is a rich fragrance in the hearts of these brethren. Those names are embalmed in our best affections, and we hope to meet those fathers where we shall part no more forever.

Let me say, that we, as a Church, have no sympathy whatever with that latitudinarian principle which would gather conflicting and discordant elements in an organic union. It is not like the seamless robe of the Savior; it is rather like the many-colored coat given to Joseph. There is no unity of principle; it is an outward unity; it is not a unity and not an exponent of doctrine.

We certainly would consider it anything else but a calamity for one of your ministers to take charge of the very best Church we have. It would do my heart good to see you occupy such a place as that which you once filled among us. We would rejoice in it as a blessing.

In regard to our co-operation in the great work of Foreign Missions, we would heartily unite with you in that, as in every other good work. In relation to that peculiarly delicate and difficult subject which you referred to, I hardly know what to say. You know the dangers that environ it. You have generously offered your money; can you send us men to help in the work we desire to be done?

You are too familiar with our Church for me to mention any of her peculiarities. You were too intimately connected with the important educational interests of our Church in this Synod, and with all her operations, for me to give you any statis-

tics. While it may be that some of us who come from the borders of civilization may not have heard that you have ceased to preach in Dutch, I know that you who live in the centre of civilization know what we are doing. I am glad that your Church is making such progress as it is. We rejoice in the advance of the Redeemer's kingdom—that Churches, united with us in faith and spirit, and in heart, are enlarging their borders and strengthening their stakes.

In the work of winning souls to Christ, our Church desires to take an honored place, and we are determined by the blessing of God to hold up that "blue banner," which has waved in the smoke of many well-fought battle-fields where truth was the issue. We are determined that this blue banner shall not remain stationary—shall not be lowered. No, no, every instinct of the heart, every memory of the past, every exigency of the present, every hope of the future, make it our duty and our delight to go forwaad in the work of winning souls for Jesus. And now we wish to move with you shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart, and that the blessing of God may rest upon you and upon your noble and faithful Church.

III.

On the fifth day of the session, the General Synod of the Reformed Church meeting, at Brooklyn, proceeded with the reception of fraternal delegates. Rev. Dr. Van Zandt, delegate to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, South, at Richmond, read his report, which had already been referred to the Committee on Correspondence. The Synod then listened to

THE ADDRESS OF REV. DR. J. R. WILSON, OF COLUMBIA, S. C.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (which I represent in the absence of Dr. Hoge) has cause for gratulation in view of the kindly intercourse which has sprung up between this venerable Synod and itself. You will reflect that, since the period of our separate organization as a Church, eleven years ago, we have been comparatively isolated—first by the wall of fire with which the civil war environed us, and then by the almost thicker wall of prejudice, whose chill presence succeded the heat of the other—we have been, to a great extent isolated from the residue of the Christian world. It was your Church, sir, that first found an opening in the barrier of separation, and extended a fraternal hand, which, as with equal gratification and promptitude we grasped, sent a thrill of joy through our entire body. And when you came, you came not to scold us, to reproach us, to judge us. Your language was not the language of a pity, which was intended to conceal a certain measure of patronizing contempt; but it was that nobler language which brotherly sympathy and Christian love alone know how to utter and intone, and which we, of all God's people on earth, were in a condition to price at its full worth. We recognize in it the spirit of your own sainted Livingston, that illustrious peace-maker, the supreme result of whose work in 1772 you are at this very time celebrating in centennial memorial.

That same language which first found eloquent tongue in the welcome address of Dr. Todd you have, within the past few weeks, again been pleased to repeat by the mouth of one whom we regard as our own with a family feeling scarcely less strong than he is regarded by yourselves—the gifted Van Zandt—whose preaching and other labors in the gospel used to be a glory to us, as now they are to you. I need not try to tell with what emotions we have responded to the advances you thus have made. I know that we love you all, and have come to long for the very closest alliance with the Church here represented, that is compatible with the continued existence of mutual affection and reciprocal confidence. We do not forget that within the past thirty years you have quite doubled your ministry, your membership, your churches, and more than quadrupled your wealth and your efficiency, so that you stand to-day a Church body "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," a body "making increase unto the edifying of itself in love." We rejoice in your prosperity and in all the evidences of it; and honor you for the peaceful modes in which you have achieved it all.

Nor do we cease to remember, with what warm thankfulness, that your doctrinal faith is, to-day, as sound as when you received it at the hands of the Reformers; and that you are as richly entitled to the name you bear — the *Reformed* Church. Equally with yourselves do we revere the thirty-seven articles of the Synod of Dort — the Heidelberg Catechism — the Belgic Confession — and find in them, as you do in our scarcely different symbols of faith, the luminous exhibition of those five cardinal points of our common Calvinistic theology, upon which our common Presbyterianism has stood during so many ages of conflict and conquest.

Your ecclesiastical government, too, is essentially the same with that which we maintain. So, too, your forms of worship are, for the most part, those with which we are familiar. We do not, indeed, feel that the gown is an indispensable ornament of our pulpits — nor that aught of an enjoined liturgy is a necessity of our solemn services — but, then, we think that you all look the better for your flowing silk, and you are none the less evangelical for such small portions of established ritual as you deem appropriate — and (there is no telling) we may ourselves one of these days be persuaded to imitate you in both.

You will suffer me, in this connection, to advert more particularly to a subject which, at the present hour, occupies the pens and fills the tongues of many good people. I allude to the subject of organic ecclesiastical union — an organic complaint, it is to be feared, in the cases of not a few sickly, sentimental Christians. As to the possibility of such a union, to be instituted between this Synod and our Assembly, some of us in the South have been venturing to dream. Nor has our dream been altogether rebuked by the waking thought. It possesses a certain coherency and substance, and may bear examination. I am not, indeed, authorized to inaugurate measures which look to so desirable an end. I know, too, that you are not engaged in devising any scheme by which such a consummation may be reached. I think, however, I am not passing the boundary of prudence when I say that the Assembly with which you are now in auspicious correspondence is ready to join hands with this General Synod whenever the favorable moment shall have come for sealing the matrimonial contract. We are standing aloof from other churches in our independent attitude, not because of any pique or pride, nor yet because we see good nowhere except in ourselves. We do behold in this body a number of elements which, if commingled with what is congenial in us, would serve to produce a compound of an excellent sort, wherein none of your peculiarities need be lost, and wherein some of ours might be helped to a brighter conspicuousness. I believe this, that if your Church shall soon overlap the line by which it has been separated from our kindred Presbyterianism, and, uniting with us, shall contribute its due share to the solution of certain ecclesiastical problems now peculiar to our position and constituting a part of our specified mission, you will have found an outlet to the working of your organization which will communicate a stimulus to your energies such as you have not hitherto felt, and raise you to a point of usefulness, from whose outlook the future will be seen to glow before your eyes with the purest and finest promise. Do I step beyond the limit of propriety when I ask you to think of this matter, and to discover whether a way may not be opened for our actually coming together in such a union as shall be at once serviceable to yourselves and beneficial to us?

Meanwhile, there is another word whose significancy is to be regarded as scarcely less potential than the word union. It is the word co-operation. The various corps of an army may not always be safely merged in one; but, first, for the reason that they are of the same grand army, they ought so to post themselves as to be enabled to act in thorough concert whenever the exigencies of the common cause shall require. With respect to one, at least, of those departments of Christian effort in which the body I represent is called to move, it is singularly situated, and, so far as outside Presbyterianism is concerned, has had to move almost alone; or, if not this, in a certain degree of conflict with others of similar faith.

You well know what it is to which I refer. We are in immediate contact with that large population whose recent sudden change of social and political relations has made them at once a source of new difficulty, and an object of new interest to all philanthropists. We feel our obligations toward this people, but we at the same time feel the special hardships which those obvious obligations impose upon

us. We are hampered by the painful fact of their having been impressed with the belief that their former masters occupy toward them an attitude unfriendly, if not antagonistic. Many of them, however, are still connected with our churches; and were we allowed access to their hearts, unhindered by all political considerations, we could soon effectively offer to them the gospel in a manner which would be attended with abundant success. As it is, we are endeavoring with consistent good-will to overcome the prejudices of all our colored people, in order to bear to them the goodness of a common salvation; and in time, in concert with our Southern evangelical denominations, will probably remove the accidental obstacles that now interpose. But we need help, sympathy, not only, but substantial help. We need co-operation—*your* co-operation. And if you or any other of God's people on this more favored side of the line, which lately was a line of war, but which we fondly believe will one day be altogether a line of peace—if you who now have wealth far beyond what we can hope for generations to acquire—and with wealth have the ear of the world, which we have not at all—will consent to entrust to us a portion of this wealth, and of whatever power may be gained by helping us to a voice which Christianity everywhere shall hear, we promise to give a good account of its expenditure in the increased spiritual prosperity of a race of people whose souls honestly we love, and whose only enslavement we desire is, that they shall be brought into the service of Christ, their Master and ours. I will not make this the occasion for finding fault with those men who, being accustomed to see no good in our Southern Christianity, still are pleased to close their eyes to its existence or its worth. At present our chief, at least our most conspicuous, sin is in our poverty, and from this you, amongst others, can aid in redeeming us. Had we the means, as we have the will, we could, by the blessing of God, make the wilderness about us bloom as the rose. We are doing something in this direction, and are not hopelessly discouraged, but we would do much, would do more and more in the hard field where so great a portion of our work lies. Pardon the candor of an appeal which would not have been made were our confidence in your friendship less, and were the sincerity of the motive not sufficiently clear.

It only remains for me to thank you for the kind attention you have been pleased to give to these remarks, and, in the name of the General Assembly I here personate, to extend to you, sir, and through you to this Synod, and to all the Classes and Churches herein represented, our most cordial greetings, with the prayer that the blessing of the God of all grace may abundantly rest upon your entire body of believers.

RESPONSE OF THE PRESIDENT.

The President of the Synod in reply said:

Dear Brother, the warm welcome which I endeavored to express when you took your seat among us, has been in feeling growing warmer during the intercourse we have had, and now culminates in ardent love for you and the body which you represent. We have sometimes heard questions raised as to the propriety and policy of expending money and trouble in personal delegations, but we feel that the emotions which your words have awakened in our hearts are worth immeasureably more than can be computed in money. We have heard your statements with profound feeling, and cannot shut our eyes to the providential circumstances of our and your history. It has been remarked by many that we have facilities for work more than we can use, and it has been asked why we have so many seminaries and other institutions endowed beyond our needs. You have intimated the purpose which God had in view, and the hearts of the Synod, as of one man, leap responsive to the suggestions you have made.

The President then referred to the Cross as the sign in which the Reformed Church goes on to conquest, and closed with an earnest expression of the affectionate regard entertained by the Synod toward the body which Dr. Wilson represented.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

The New York *Evangelist*, in noticing this proposal, comments upon it as follows:

This project of union may, at first glance, excite suprise. But the advantages which it offers cannot be overlooked by either party. The Presbyterian Church South would no longer be sectional, as the Reformed would supply it with a highly respectable Northern element that has never rendered itself obnoxious, like the Northern General Assemblies, to Southern feelings, while it would receive a large accession of wealth and strength. On the other hand the Reformed Church would emerge from the comparative humility of its position, with its four or five hundred churches, and, in connection with the Presbyterian Church South, would command respect for number as well as character, and occupy a denominational position entitling its voice to a weight it has never yet possessed.

Some difficulties, of course, would obstruct the consummation of the suggested union, but they would be rather those of ecclesiastical order than of doctrine. So far as the material of the two Churches is concerned, the project might be pronounced feasible enough, if not desirable. But we apprehend that the ancient prejudice which rallied, though vainly, to retain the "Dutch" in the official name of the Reformed Church, would take even graver umbrage at a proposition which would require also the surrender of the word "Reformed," and leave the representative of Dutch ecclesiastical ascendancy in the New World shorn of every external badge of a descent of which it may well be proud. Still, in these times, the bare proposition of such an union has no little significance.

IV.

Address to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), Oct. 10, 1872, by Rev. J. S. Grasty, D. D., of Shelbyville, Ky., Delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Moderator, Fathers, and Brethren:

I stand before you to-day as the delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. I am commissioned to bear to this Synod heartfelt salutations, christian sympathy, and honest expressions of fraternal regard. The authority entrusted to me does not extend further. The body that I represent did not think it delicate to advise, much less to urge, a court of Jesus Christ, composed of such constituents as this, in reference either to expediency or duty. It is presumed that the Synod of Missouri understands its own business, and the obligations flowing therefrom, far better than parties, however kindly disposed, who live at a distance, and who are acquainted, only at second hand, with the facts and the situation. Whether, therefore, in the matter of organic union, you shall decide, either now, in the future, or ever at all, to cast in your lot with another, is a question which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States

feels it but fair and graceful to leave to the calm deliberations of your own enlightened judgment. It is not that we are indifferent to the discussion, and the results, but this conclusion is reached by a sense of manliness as respects ourselves, and of courtesy in regard to you. For notwithstanding our backwardness to counsel or suggest, I am persuaded, that no where in the world does the pulse of christian confidence and affection beat more steadily and truly toward this Synod, than in that Assembly which I have the honor to represent. But it is due to this very fellowship, and trust, that we determined not to meddle in your affairs. For we are willing to accord to those whom we honor and love—to those whose history and faith are so nearly identified with our own, a wisdom sufficient to guide, outside of advice or dictation proffered from abroad.

It may be interesting to know that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, during the year ending April 1, 1872, reports:

Synods,	11
Presbyteries,	56
Ministers and Licentiates,	912
Candidates,	205
Churches,	1,545
Members added on examination,	5,561
Adults baptized,	1,685
Infants baptized,	3,799
Children in S. S. and Bible Classes,	55,943
Whole number of communicants,	95,000

MONEYS CONTRIBUTED.

Domestic Missions and Sustentation,	$51,899
Foreign Missions,	41,000
Education,	47,532
Publication,	10,479
Invalid Fund,	8,518
Pastor's Salaries,	432,000
Congregational Purposes,	415,955
Miscellaneous,	76,362

It will be seen at a glance, that in the increase of members, and candidates for the gospel ministry, there is much to excite gratitude and praise to the Great Head of the Church. The Spirit of awakening and revival has been poured upon the congregations, while the Theological Seminaries, in Virginia and South Carolina, report additions to their lists unparalleled in the history of these "schools of the prophets."

If the contributions of our Zion appear to fall short, let it be remembered that these are the offerings of that South which,

seven years ago, was a desolation. In one section her wealth was scattered, her fields wasted, her homes decaying, or wholly destroyed; while in another region, congregations were taxed with vexatious lawsuits, and in the end, forced to surrender the sanctuaries in which their fathers had worshiped. Litigation, loss of property, and the necessity imposed of building new houses of worship, and also parsonages for ministers turned out of doors, these unusual calls diverted large sums of money which, otherwise, might have flowed into the treasuries of our different Committees. I mention these facts not to excite bitterness (for would to God all occasion for bitterness, and all bitterness itself, were clean gone forever) but to vindicate justice and prevent misconception.

Nevertheless, much, very much, has been accomplished by a people who stripped, almost to nakedness, in every particular, were encompassed by diversified needs, not a single one of which, could be wholly silenced or adjourned. However scant the income, nothing could wait. A little relief must be afforded forthwith to each, or destruction was inevitable to all. Hence with such divisions and subdivisions of funds, it was impossible in the nature of the case, to donate largely to any one object. But, thanks to our Heavenly Father, obstacles are gradually disappearing, and a field of opportunity opens to the Presbyterianism of the South, wider and more inspiriting than the fathers ever know. It is our purpose, therefore, imploring divine help, to go forth to possess this land in the strength of that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

It may not be amiss to mention, just here, that, in accordance with the appointment of the General Assembly at its sessions in Huntsville, Ala., May, 1871, Rev. J. H. Bryson attended the General Synod of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, which met in the city of Albany, New York, on June 7th, 1871. Mr. Bryson, in the General Assembly that met at Richmond, Va., on May 16, 1872, reported as follows:

It affords me much pleasure to report that I was received by that body with the greatest cordiality and christian friendship, as the first delegate from the General Assembly of our Church. My reception was an occasion of intense interest, as I was to respond to their friendly overtures. And when I stood up before that venerable Synod to assure them that our General

Assembly most cordially accepted their kind propositions touching a fraternal correspondence, and that I was commissioned to bear to them the warm salutations and christian sympathies of our Church, every heart seemed to overflow with rejoicing at the happy issue of the matter they had ventured to propose. Again and again did I receive the warmest congratulations touching the fraternal alliance that was now so favorably established between the two bodies. Nothing was wanting to make my mission every thing I could wish for the beloved Church I was honored to represent; and I can not too strongly express the earnest and warm cordiality that characterized my reception by that noble christian people. The Synod heard with pleasure and profound interest all that I communicated touching our beloved Zion, her doctrines, her history, her trials, and the good work she was endeavoring to accomplish for the cause of our common Lord and King. They expressed their earnest gratification at the wonderful success that had attended all our operations, and assured us that they would ever feel a deep interest in all that pertained to our future welfare and prosperity. In taking my leave, I was charged to bear back to the beloved Church I represented, their warmest salutations, and christian sympathies, and I was instructed to give the assurance that they were ready, through the fraternal alliance now so favorably established, to co-operate with us in every suitable way, to advance the interests of the glorious kingdom of our common Lord and Master. During the sessions of the General Synod, Rev. Dr. VanZandt was appointed to attend the next session of our General Assembly, to be held in the city of Richmond, Va., on the 16th of May, 1872.

Moderator, those who were present in Richmond, Va., and heard the eloquent words—the words of doctrinal accord—of overflowing sympathy—which fell from the lips of that brother—can never recall the occasion without recurring sentiments of thankfulness and emotion. For I am persuaded that, in that vast assembly of spectators and commissioners, not a heart was unmoved, scarcely a cheek which did not moisten with a tear. It was felt in every bosom that the delegate himself, and that noble communion which he represented—in symbols, in doctrine, in principles, and in witness for the truth—are so essentially one with ourselves—the line of demarcation so impalpable, and the elements of attraction so large, that organic union between the bodies is an event of unavoidable fulfillment. Mutual confidence, identity of aim—obliterates the thin shadow of ecclesiastical divergence, and already an effort has been made to substantiate any difference that divides the one from the

other. With this homogeneity of government, this oneness of faith and of spirit, it is impossible, I repeat, in the nature of things, that we can long exist apart. And the union of the Dutch Reformed Church—renowned in its ministers and its congregations, for soundness of doctrine and purity of life—with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, will be an event fruitful of rejoicing to every lover of truth and fraternity, throughout the land. God speed the day.

Moderator, in standing before the Synod of Missouri, and on a critical occasion like the present, may I not be allowed to state, in briefest outline, those doctrines and principles which have ever been cherished by the General Assembly whose delegate I am. It would, indeed, be pleasant to enlarge upon that "form of sound words," which, dear to the fathers, in the day of their adversity, became, and has ever remained, a symbol of fidelity to the cause of the Master. But the time allotted admonishes me to be short. We hold—

1. That no improvement has been, or can be, made upon the "faith once delivered to the saints." As Inspiration furnished it, so it must stand. Nothing can be added, not a word taken away. As the fathers held, so hold we, to the federal headship of Adam; and teach that "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposite unto all that is spiritually good and wholly inclined to all that is evil and that continually."

2. That the redemption of the fallen proceeds only upon the ground of a gracious covenant; and that this agreement between the Father and the Son, existed before the worlds were made. A seed was promised in the councils of eternity, and the atonement was provided inside of this covenant in order to ransom and redeem the "chosen generation." As Adam was the representative of the race, so Jesus Christ is the Head of His people, and as Adam's disobedience entailed guilt, misery, and death upon all, so the righteousness of Christ, set down to the account of the believer, delivers from condemnation, and introduces to life. No man could bring a price for his brother: The Lord laid help upon ONE who is mighty to save. Salvation is of God.

3. Justification by faith, and by faith alone, as the instru-

mental condition. And we hold that this justification is a purely judicial act, and does not proceed upon any work or merit of the creature, but is pronounced solely upon the ground of that perfect conformity to law "in all things," which none ever possessed save the believer's great Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ THE RIGHTEOUS. Faith itself is a gracious gift, and through God's power, begets that condition of mind and heart where confidence in the flesh is renounced, inability confessed, and the soul looks to Jesus and to Jesus only. No man can come to the Son except the Father who sent the Son draw him, yet God's people are willing in the day of HIS power.

4. The agency of the Holy Spirit. This is manifest in regeneration. For we are "His workmanship." "A new creation." "Begotten again unto a lively hope." Intellect, affections, will, the entire man is brought into subjection. The Spirit of all grace also begets conversion, and repentance unto life, working in the renewed and pious heart, to will and to do of his good pleasure.

5. We hold that the provisions of grace contain and embrace every condition, mean, and instrument necessary to the believer's sanctification, perseverance, and final safety. Every item, indispensable to the execution of redemption, was irreversibly secured in the covenant itself. The agreement was positive, and irrepealable, that the Redeemer should "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." He should have "divided to Him a portion with the great and a spoil with the strong." And in order to this, all that the Father gave Him, in the covenant, must come to Him, and it was and is "the will of the Father which sent Him, that of all which He had given Him, He should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." God's people are kept by God's power, and no weapon formed against them shall prosper. Every step in the believer's pilgrimage to glory was measured, fenced, and guarded in that sure and well ordered covenant which was agreed upon in the councils of eternity by the Father and the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Taking the commission of the great God, our Saviour, as it stands, it is ventured to preach these doctrines, which though repugnant to human nature, exalt Jehovah to His throne, while they take away all boasting from the creature, and humble man in the dust. It is thus that the

ambassador for Christ goes forth with the word, dependent solely upon that Omnipotent Spirit, that worketh when, and where, He wills.

6. While the Church is in the world it is not of it. True, Church and State are both divine in their origin, and it is the duty of both preacher and people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake, yet the Church and State have different objects and spheres of action, different governments and officers, and are independent of each other. While the Christian, as citizen, is in duty bound to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, yea more, to cultivate patriotic sentiment, and encourage all due obedience to law, yet it is the opinion of that Assembly whose delegate I am, that no court of Jesus Christ, as such, can endorse any political constitution in all its provisions, requirements, and principles, and profess unabated loyalty thereto. Neither can it by authority acknowledge and declare its obligation to promote and perpetuate, as far as in it lies, the integrity of any particular form of government, and to strengthen and encourage it, in the exercise of all its functions. We hold that to decide political questions violates the Spirit of Christ's true Church, and usurps over the consciences of the people, the prerogative of the Divine Master Himself. Furthermore, that "there are two distinct and complete governments appointed for man—one the civil government, from the Lord Christ as King of nations, and the other the ecclesiastical government, from the Lord Christ as King of saints. That these two jurisdictions, though to some extent over the same subjects, are ordained of Christ to be kept distinct. That as the power of the sword committed to the civil government may not be used to do the spiritual work of the Church, so, on the other hand, the power of the keys, and the agencies and ordinances of the church government may not be prostituted to the promotion of merely secular and political purposes." "The citizen owes allegiance only to the State, and is bound to uphold the civil government, but the Church, as such, owes allegiance only to the Lord Jesus; His kingdom is the only kingdom she is bound to uphold; hence she can be loyal only to her own King."

I have thus, Moderator, presented in briefest outline, the doc-

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trines and principles for which the General Assembly in the United States are contending before the world. In the name of God we lift up our banners. In conclusion allow me to hope, and to pray, that the deliberations of this Synod may be guided and overruled by Him who is Head over all things to the Church.

MODERATOR'S RESPONSE.

In the name of the Old School Synod of Missouri, I give to you, dear Brother, a most hearty welcome. We rejoice to receive you as the representative of a Christian people whom we sincerely love; and in everything that concerns them we take a very deep interest. In the sore trials through which it has pleased the great Head of the Church, in the mysterious dispensations of his providence, to suffer your churches to pass, we assure you, beloved Brother, they have had our deepest sympathy—nay, in a good measure we have been fellow sufferers. We most sincerely rejoice to hear through you, that the rainbow of hope is once more seen in your sky, that the clouds are all dispersing and that the bright sunshine of a fairer and a better day pours its radiance over you. Now my Brother, we are glad and rejoice with exceeding great joy in view of your present and prospective prosperity, just as before our hearts poured out their sorrow at your adversity. No language better expresses the emotions awakened on hearing what great things God is doing for his people than the word of the inspired poet: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dreamed. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." With what pleasure has the Synod heard you tell of your hundreds proclaiming the great salvation, of the large number of your churches forming a mighty army of Christian soldiers to push on the conquests of our Immanuel, of the crowds of children gathered with each returning Sabbath into your Sunday-schools to be trained and led to Jesus and to heaven, of the nearly six thousand souls happily converted to the Lord during the past year, and last, though not least, our souls thrilled with pleasure at learning how much God has enabled his struggling and afflicted people to do for the perishing heathen. In response to the summary of gospel doctrine and ecclesiastical

polity which you have so clearly placed before the Synod to day we can only utter a loud emphatic and heartfelt *Amen.*

The Synod has now under consideration our ecclesiastical relations. What may be the result touching organic union, I of course know not. One thing however I may say for myself, there are other matters which I can not but consider much sorer evils than even organic severance, in the church of God. In truth, from one point of view, I think the church has ever been one and can never be rent in twain. Just as the great rock strata which underlie the surface of our earth, show in each marked characteristics, teaching us that every separate stratum is *absolutely one,* however much deep seas and gaping mountain gorges may seem to cut and divide it, so the church in every separate part and member is marked as one inseparable body of our Lord Redeemer, by those heavenly beliefs and glorious experiences which you, my Brother, were enabled so clearly, so forcibly and so eloquently to place before and urge upon us on last evening from that sacred desk. Yes indeed Christ's true and holy church is *one.* And his promise is fulfilled "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." *Christ's* CHURCH IS ONE and his prayer is not unheard, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

Dear Brother, bear with you to the churches you so faithfully represent, our warmest christian greeting and assurances of our undying love.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

"My kingdom is not of this world." It is refreshing in these days of Ceæsarism to find two bodies of Christians who have warmly supported opposite sides in the political quarrel which has convulsed this country, able to approach each other in perfect kindness. Such is the case with our brethren of the Reformed Synod and our own General Assembly. We understand each other thoroughly. They were almost unanimously Federal in sentiment and we Confederate. But both bodies have kept politics out of church affairs, and so now, that the war is over, there is no barrier betwixt us. We can correspond fraternally—or, should Providence favor it, we can unite organically without compromising anybody's principles. And among the the motives which seem to render this proposed unoin desirable, not the least is the sublime testimony it shall bear to the supremacy of the Redeemer and the separateness of his kingdom from all secular concerns.—*Memphis Presbyterian.*

V.

[It was intended to insert here the Address of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., but as it was not written the effort to obtain it has not yet succeeded.]

The matter of Appendix is quoted thus: I. and II. from *The Central Presbyterian*, Richmond, Va., May 29, 1872; III. from *The Christian Observer and Commonwealth*, Louisville and Richmond, June 26, 1872; IV. from *The Old School Presbyterian*, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 1, 1872.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

The Old School Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 8, 1872, of which this Letter was published as a Supplement, gives the following editorial notice of it:

"OUR SUPPLEMENT.—Rev. Dr. Dickson, of the Committee from the Northern Assembly, asked our Synod to appoint a committee to state the causes which have led to our present position, and the obstacles to our union with the Assembly he represented.

"We do not know that we can better and more briefly describe our Supplement than by saying that it is, though not of purpose, a compliance with Dr. Dickson's request. It was designed, as its distinguished author asserts, to be laid before the Synod, at its recent meeting, had opportunity offered; and, therefore, it could not have been prepared specifically to give the information asked for by Dr. Dickson. Nevertheless, it is a statement of the causes which have led to our present position, and of the obstacles to our union with the Northern Assembly.

"And it is a clear, perfectly intelligible, masterly statement. Dr. Laws answers these two questions: '*How is it that the Synod of Missouri became isolated?*' and, '*Why cannot the Synod of Missouri connect itself with the General Assembly North?*' He answers them most courteously and most conclusively. We thank him, not only because he has calmly and plainly set forth our grievances, but also, and chiefly, because he has demonstrated, beyond cavil, that there is a vital, an irreconcilable difference between this Synod and the Northern Assembly as to *Presbyterianism and the nature and province of the Church.* We trust, therefore, that both our friends and our opponents will give Dr. Laws' 'Letter' a careful and impartial reading."